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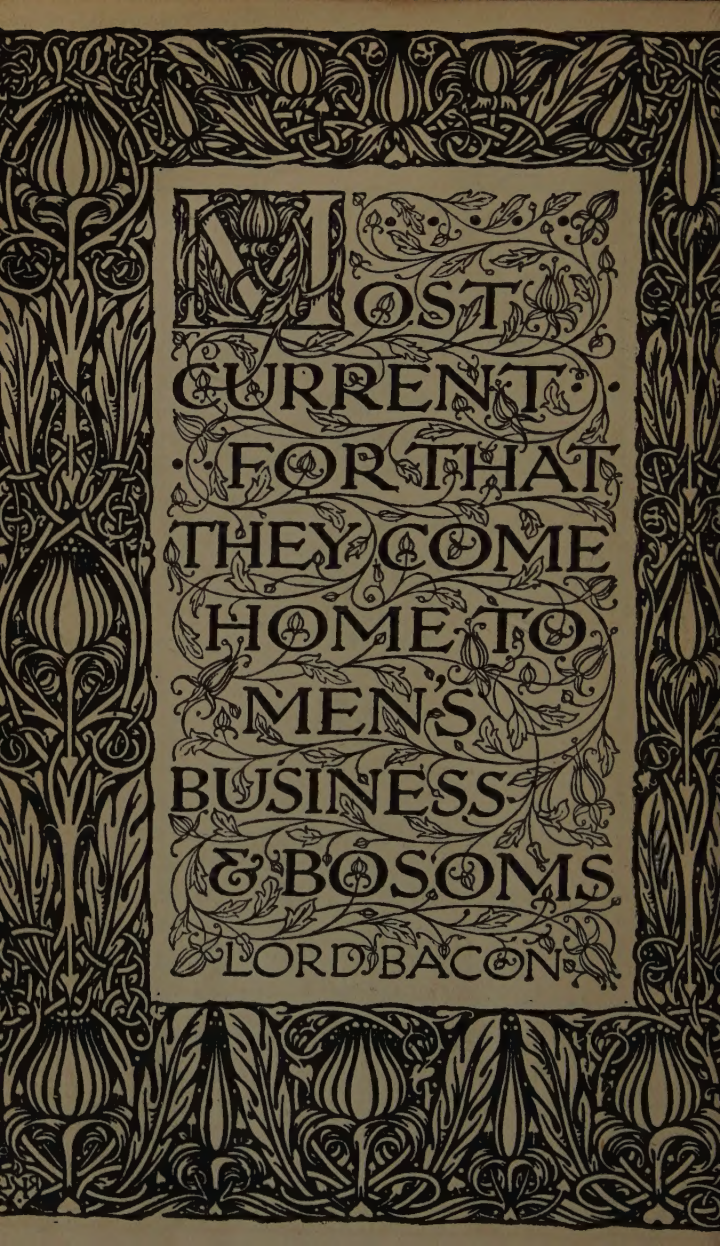
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The ENGLISH MAIL-COACH and OTHER ESSAYS &c. BY THOMAS DE QUINCEY

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INTRODUCTION

By JOHN HILL BURTON

Being the account of Thomas De Quincey given in "The Book-Hunter," under the transparent disguise of "Thomas Papaverius."

The next slide of the lantern is to represent a quite peculiar and abnormal case. It introduces a strangely fragile, unsubstantial, and puerile figure, wherein, however, resided one of the most potent and original spirits that ever frequented a tenement of clay. He shall be called, on account of associations that may not be found out, Thomas Papaverius. But how to make palpable to the ordinary human being one so signally divested of all the material and common characteristics of his race, yet so nobly endowed with its rarer and loftier attributes, almost paralyses the pen at its very beginning.

In what mood and what shape shall he be brought forward? Shall it be as first we met at the table of Lucullus, whereto he was seduced by the false pretence that he would there meet with one who entertained novel and anarchical opinions regarding the Golden Ass of Apuleius? No one speaks of waiting dinner for him. He will come and depart at his own sweet will, neither burdened with punctualities, nor burdening others by exacting them. The festivities of the afternoon are far on when a commotion is heard in the hall as if some dog or other stray animal had found its way in. The instinct of a friendly guest tells him of the arrival—he opens the door, and fetches in the little stranger. Who can it be? A street-boy of some sort? His costume, in fact, is a boy's duffle great-coat, very threadbare, with a hole in it, and buttoned tight to the chin, where it meets the fragments of a parti-coloured belcher handkerchief; on his feet are list-shoes, covered with snow, for it is a stormy winter night; and the trousers—some one suggests that they are inner linen garments blackened with writing-ink, but that Papaverius never would have been at the trouble so to disguise them. What can be

the theory of such a costume? The simplest thing in the world—it consisted of the fragments of apparel nearest at hand. Had chance thrown to him a court single-breasted coat, with a bishop's apron, a kilt, and top-boots, in these he would have made his entry.

The first impression that a boy has appeared vanishes instantly. Though in one of the sweetest and most genial of his essays he shows how every man retains so much in him of the child he originally was—and he himself retained a great deal of that primitive simplicity—it was buried within the depths of his heart—not visible externally. On the contrary, on one occasion when he corrected an erroneous reference to an event as being a century old, by saying that he recollected its occurrence, one felt almost a surprise at the necessary limitation in his age, so old did he appear, with his arched brow loaded with thought, and the countless little wrinkles that engrained his skin, gathering thickly round the curiously expressive and subtle lips. His lips are speedily opened by some casual remark, and presently the flood of talk passes forth from them, free, clear, and continuous—never rising into declamation—never losing a certain mellow earnestness, and all consisting of sentences as exquisitely joined together as if they were destined to challenge the criticism of the remotest posterity. Still the hours stride over each other, and still flows on the stream of gentle rhetoric, as if it were *labitur et labetur in omne volubilis aevum*. It is now far in to the night, and slight hints and suggestions are propagated about separation and home-going. The topic starts new ideas on the progress of civilisation, the effect of habit on men in all ages, and the power of domestic affections. Descending from the generals to the special, he could testify to the inconvenience of late hours; for, was it not the other night that, coming to what was, or what he believed to be, his own door, he knocked and knocked, but the old woman within either couldn't or wouldn't hear him, so he scrambled over a wall, and having taken his repose in a furrow, was able to testify to the extreme unpleasantness of such a couch. The predial groove might indeed nourish kindly the infant seed and shoots of the peculiar vegetable to which it was appropriated, but was not a comfortable place of repose for adult man.

Shall I try another sketch of him, when travel-stained and foot-sore, he glided in on us one night like a shadow, the child by the fire gazing on him with round eyes of astonishment,

and suggesting that he should get a penny and go home—a proposal which he subjected to some philosophical criticism very far wide of its practical tenor. How far he had wandered since he had last refreshed himself, or even whether he had eaten food that day, were matters on which there was no getting articulate utterance from him. Though his costume was muddy, however, and his communications about the material wants of life very hazy, the ideas which he had stored up during his wandering poured themselves forth as clear and sparkling, both in logic and language, as the purest fountain that springs for a Highland rock. How that wearied, worn, little body was to be refreshed was a difficult problem: soft food disagreed with him—the hard he could not eat. Suggestions pointed at length to the solution of that vegetable unguent to which he had given a sort of lustre, and it might be supposed that there were some fifty cases of acute toothache to be treated in the house that night. How many drops? Drops! nonsense. If the wine-glasses of the establishment were not beyond the ordinary normal size, there was no risk—and so the weary is at rest for a time.

At early morn a triumphant cry of *Eureka!* calls me to his place of rest. With his unfailing instinct he has got at the books, and lugged a considerable heap of them round him. That one which specially claims his attention—my best bound quarto is spread upon a piece of bedroom furniture readily at hand, and of sufficient height to let him pore over it recumbent as he lies upon the floor, with only one article of attire to separate him from the condition in which Archimedes, according to the popular story, shouted the same triumphant cry. He had discovered a very remarkable anachronism in the commonly received histories of a very important period. As he expounded it, turning up his unearthly face from the book with an almost painful expression of grave eagerness, it occurred to me that I had seen something like the scene in Dutch paintings of the temptation of St. Anthony.

Suppose the scene enlarged to a pleasant country-house, where the enlivening talk has made the guest forget

> "The lang Scots miles,
> The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,"

that lie between him and his place of rest. He must be instructed in his course, but the instruction reveals more difficulties than it removes, and there is much doubt and

discussion which Papaverius at once clears up as effectually as he had ever dispersed a cloud of logical sophisms—he will accompany the forlorn traveller, and lead him through the difficulties of the way—for have not midnight musings and wanderings made him familiar with all its intricacies? Roofed by a huge wideawake which makes his tiny figure look like the stalk of some great fungus, with a lantern of more than common dimensions in his hand, away he goes down the wooded path, up the steep bank, along the brawling stream, and across the waterfall—and even as he goes there comes from him a continued stream of talk concerning the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, and other kindred matters. Surely if we two were seen by any human eyes, it must have been supposed that some gnome, or troll, or kelpie was luring the listener to his doom. The worst of such affairs as this was his consciousness that when left, the old man would continue walking on until weariness overcoming him, he would take his rest, wherever that happened, like some poor mendicant. He used to denounce, with his most fervent eloquence, that barbarous and brutal provision of the law of England which rendered sleeping in the open air an act of vagrancy, and so punishable, if the sleeper could not give a satisfactory account of himself—a thing which Papaverius never could give under any circumstances. After all, I fear this is an attempt to describe the indescribable. It was the commonest of sayings, when any of his friends were mentioning to each other "his last," and creating mutual shrugs of astonishment, that, were one to attempt to tell all about him, no man would believe it, so separate would the whole be from all the normal conditions of human nature.

The difficulty becomes more inextricable in passing from specific little incidents to an estimation of the general character of the man. The logicians lucidly describe definition as being *per genus et differentiam*. You have the characteristics in which all of the *genus* partake as common ground, and then you individualise your object by showing in what it differs from the others of the genus. But we are denied this standard for Papaverius, so entirely did he stand apart, divested of the ordinary characteristics of social man—of whose characteristics without which the human race as a body could not get on or exist. For instance, those who knew him a little might call him a loose man in money matters; those who knew him closer laughed at the idea of coupling any notion of pecuniary

or other like responsibility with his nature. You might as well attack the nature of the nightingale, which may have nipped up your five-pound note and torn it to shreds to serve as building nest material. Only immediate craving necessities could ever extract from him an acknowledgment of the common vulgar agencies by which men subsist in civilised society; and only while the necessity lasted did the acknowledgment exist. Take just one example, which will render this clearer than any generalities. He arrives very late at a friend's door, and on gaining admission—a process in which he often endured impediments—he represents with his usual silver voice and measured rhetoric, the absolute necessity of his being then and there invested with a sum of money in the current coin of the realm—the amount limited, from the nature of his necessities, which he very freely states, to seven shillings and sixpence. Discovering, or fancying he discovers, signs that his eloquence is likely to be unproductive, he is fortunately reminded that should there be any difficulty in connection with security for the repayment of the loan, he is at the moment in possession of a document which he is prepared to deposit with the lender, a document calculated, he cannot doubt, to remove any feeling of anxiety which the most prudent person could experience in the circumstances. After a rummage in his pockets which develops miscellaneous and varied, but as yet by no means valuable possessions, he at last comes to the object of his search, a crumpled bit of paper, and at last pulls it out—a fifty-pound bank-note! The friend, who knew him well, was of the opinion that had he, on delivering over the seven shillings and sixpence, received the bank-note, he never would have heard anything more of the transaction from the other party. It was also his opinion that before coming to a personal friend, the owner of the note had made several efforts to raise money on it among persons who might take a purely business view of such transactions; but the lateness of the hour, and something in the appearance of the thing altogether, had induced these mercenaries to forget their cunning, and decline their transaction.

He stretched till it broke the proverb that to give quickly is as good as to give twice. His giving was quick enough on the rare occasions when he had wherewithal to give, but then the act was final, and could not be repeated. If he suffered in his own person from this peculiarity, he suffered still more in his sympathies, for he was full of them to all breathing creatures,

and like poor Goldy, it was agony to him to hear the beggar's cry of distress, and to hear it without the means of assuaging it, though in a departed fifty pounds there were doubtless the elements for appeasing many a street wail. All sums of money were measured by him through the common standard of immediate use; and with more solemn pomp of diction than he applied to the bank-note, might he inform you that with the gentleman opposite, to whom he had hitherto been entirely a stranger, but who happened to be nearest to him at the time when the exigency occurred to him, he had just succeeded in negotiating a loan of "twopence." He was and is a great authority in political economy. I have known great anatomists and physiologists as careless of their health as he was of his purse, whence I have inferred that something more than a knowledge of the abstract truth of political economy is necessary to keep some men from pecuniary imprudence, and that something more than a knowledge of the received principles of physiology is necessary to bring others into a course of perfect sobriety and general obedience to the laws of health. Further, Papaverius had an extraordinary insight into practical human life; not merely in the abstract, but in the concrete; not merely as a philosopher of human nature, but as one who saw into those who passed him in the walk of life with the kind of intuition attributed to expert detectives —a faculty that is known to have belonged to more than one dreamer, and is one of the mysteries of J. J. Rousseau; and, by the way, like Rousseau's, his handwriting was clear, angular, and unimpassioned, and not less legible and uniform than printing—as if the medium of conveying so noble a thing as thought ought to be carefully and symmetrically and decorously constructed, let all other material things be as neglectfully and scornfully dealt with as may be.

This is a long proemium to the description of his characteristics as a book-hunter, but these can be briefly told. Not for him were the common enjoyments and excitements of the pursuit. He cared not to add volume unto volume and heap up the relics of the printing-press. All the external niceties about pet editions, peculiarities of binding or of printing, rarity itself, were no more to him than to the Arab or the Hottentot. His pursuit, indeed, was like that of the savage who seeks but to appease the hunger of the moment. If he catch a prey just sufficient for his desires it is well; yet he will not hesitate to bring down the elk or the buffalo, and, satiating

himself with the choicer delicacies, abandon the bulk of the carcass to the wolves or the vultures. So of Papaverius. If his intellectual appetite were craving after some passage in the *Oedipus* or in the *Medeia*, or *Plato's Republic*, he would be quite contented with the most tattered and valueless fragment of the volume, if it contained what he wanted; but, on the other hand, he would not hesitate to seize upon your tall copy in russia gilt and tooled. Nor would the exemption of an *editio princeps* from everyday sordid work restrain his sacrilegious hands. If it should contain the thing he desires to see, what is to hinder him from wrenching out the twentieth volume of your *Encyclopédie Méthodique*, or *Ersch und Gruber*, leaving a vacancy like an extracted front tooth, and carrying it off to his den of Cacus? If you should mention the matter to any vulgar-mannered acquaintance given to the unhallowed practice of jeering, he would probably touch his nose with his extended palm and say, "Don't you wish you may get it?" True, the world at large has gained a brilliant essay on Euripides or Plato—but what is that to the rightful owner of the lost sheep?

The learned world may very fairly be divided into those who return the books borrowed by them, and those who do not. Papaverius belongs decidedly to the latter order. A friend addicted to the marvellous boasts that, under the pressure of a call by a public library to replace a mutilated book with a new copy, which would have cost £30, he recovered a volume from Papaverius, through the agency of a person specially bribed and authorised to take any necessary measures, insolence and violence excepted; but the power of extraction that must have been employed in such a process excites very painful reflections. Some legend, too, there is of a book creditor having forced his way into the Cacus den and there seen a sort of rubble-work inner wall of volumes, with their edges outwards, while others, bound and unbound, the plebeian sheep skin and the aristocratic russian, were squeezed into certain tubs drawn from the washing establishment of a confiding landlady. In other instances, the book has been recognised at large, greatly advanced in value by a profuse edging of manuscript notes from a gifted pen—a phenomenon calculated to bring into practical use the speculations of the civilians about pictures painted on other people's panels. What became of all his waifs and strays, it might be well not to inquire too curiously. If he ran short of legitimate *tabulæ*

rasa to write on, do you think he would hesitate to tear out the most convenient leaves of any broad-margined book, whether belonging to himself or another? Nay, it is said that he once gave in a copy written on the edges of a tall octavo *Somnium Scipionis;* and as he did not obliterate the original matter, the printer was rather puzzled, and made a funny jumble between the letterpress Latin and the manuscript English. All these things were the types of an intellectual vitality which despised and thrust aside all that was gross or material in that wherewith it came in contact. Surely never did the austerities of monk or anchorite so entirely cast all these away as his peculiar nature removed them from him. It may be questioned whether he ever knew what it was "to eat a good dinner," or could even comprehend the nature of such a felicity. Yet in all the sensuous nerves which connect, as it were, the body with the ideal, he was painfully susceptible. Hence a false quantity or a wrong note in music was agony to him; and it is remembered with what ludicrous solemnity he apostrophised his unhappy fate as one over whom a cloud of the darkest despair had just been drawn—a peacock had come to live within hearing distance from him, and not only the terrific yells of the accursed biped pierced him to the soul, but the continued terror of their recurrence kept his nerves in agonising tension during the intervals of silence.

Peace be with his gentle and kindly spirit, now for some time separated from its grotesque and humble tenement of clay. It is both right and pleasant to say that the characteristics here spoken of were not those of his latter days. In these he was attended by affectionate hands; and I have always thought it a wonderful instance of the power of domestic care and management that, through the ministrations of a devoted offspring, this strange being was so cared for, that those who came in contact with him then, and then only, might have admired him as the patriarchal head of an agreeable and elegant household.

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The following is a list of the works of Thomas de Quincey:—

Westmoreland Gazette (edited by), 1819; Confessions of an Opium-Eater (from the *London Magazine*), 1822; Edition revised and enlarged by Author, 1856; Klosterheim, or the Masque, 1839; Logic of Political Economy, 1844; contributions to the *London Magazine* from 1821 to 1824; Confessions of an Opium-Eater, Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected, Notes from the Pocket-Book of an Opium-Eater, Moral Effects of Revolutions, Dialogue of Three Templars; Walladmor: Analysis of a German Novel (pretended to be by Sir W. Scott); articles on the Rosicrucians and Freemasons, Jean Paul Richter, Kant's writings, Herder, Malthus, Ricardo, Kant, etc., contributions to *Blackwood*, 1827-1849; Lessing's Laocoon, Murder as one of the Fine Arts, German Literature, Coleridge and Opium-Eating, English Mail-Coach; Suspiria de Profundis, a sequel to the Confessions; and articles on Kant, Berkeley, Ricardo, Sir W. Hamilton, the Cæsars, Charlemagne, Cicero, the Essenes, etc., and some tales; contributions to *Tait's Magazine*, 1834-1851; Sketches of Life and Manners, and Lake Reminiscences, from 1807 to 1831; Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, Recollections of Grasmere, Society of the Lakes, articles on Charles Lamb, W. Savage Landor, on Oxford, the German language, etc.; in 1857 articles contributed to the *Titan* were republished under the title of China. Also, contributions to Knight's *Quarterly Magazine*, *Edinburgh Literary Gazette*, Hogg's *Instructor*. His Autobiographical Sketches are given, with intercalations, alterations, and additions, by the author in the first two volumes of the 1853 edition of Works.

Collected Works.—Boston, 20 volumes, 1852-1855; First English Collection, 14 volumes, Selections Grave and Gay, 1853-1860; in 15 volumes, 1862; new and enlarged edition, by D. Masson, in 14 volumes, 1889-1890. Posthumous works:—A. H. Japp, 1891-1893; Uncollected Writings, edited by J. Hogg, 1890; Life, by H. A. Page, 1881; by David Masson, English Men of Letters, 1881; by H. S. Salt, 1904; Recollections, by J. R. Findlay, 1886; De Quincey and his Friends, by J. Hogg, 1895.

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THE ENGLISH MAIL-COACH

SECTION THE FIRST

THE GLORY OF MOTION

SOME twenty or more years before I matriculated at Oxford, Mr. Palmer, at that time M.P. for Bath, had accomplished two things, very hard to do on our little planet, the Earth, however cheap they may be held by eccentric people in comets—he had invented mail-coaches, and he had married the daughter [1] of a duke. He was, therefore, just twice as great a man as Galileo, who did certainly invent (or, which is the same thing,[2] discover) the satellites of Jupiter, those very next things extant to mail-coaches in the two capital pretensions of speed and keeping time, but, on the other hand, who did *not* marry the daughter of a duke.

These mail-coaches, as organised by Mr. Palmer, are entitled to a circumstantial notice from myself, having had so large a share in developing the anarchies of my subsequent dreams; an agency which they accomplished, first, through velocity, at that time unprecedented—for they first revealed the glory of motion; secondly, through grand effects for the eye between lamp-light and the darkness upon solitary roads; thirdly, through animal beauty and power so often displayed in the class of horses selected for this mail service; fourthly, through the conscious presence of a central intellect, that, in the midst of vast distances [3]—of storms, of darkness, of danger—overruled all obstacles into one steady co-operation to a national result. For my own feeling, this post-office service spoke as

[1] Lady Madeline Gordon.

[2] "*The same thing:*"—Thus, in the calendar of the Church Festivals, the discovery of the true cross (by Helen, the mother of Constantine) is recorded (and one might think—with the express consciousness of sarcasm) as the *Invention* of the Cross.

[3] "*Vast distances:*"—One case was familiar to mail-coach travellers, where two mails in opposite directions, north and south, starting at the same minute from points six hundred miles apart, met almost constantly at a particular bridge which bisected the total distance.

by some mighty orchestra, where a thousand instruments, all disregarding each other, and so far in danger of discord, yet all obedient as slaves to the supreme *baton* of some great leader, terminate in a perfection of harmony like that of heart, brain, and lungs, in a healthy animal organisation. But, finally, that particular element in this whole combination which most impressed myself, and through which it is that to this hour Mr. Palmer's mail-coach system tyrannises over my dreams by terror and terrific beauty, lay in the awful *political* mission which at that time it fulfilled. The mail-coach it was that distributed over the face of the land, like the opening of apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria, of Waterloo. These were the harvests that, in the grandeur of their reaping, redeemed the tears and blood in which they had been sown. Neither was the meanest peasant so much below the grandeur and the sorrow of the times as to confound battles such as these, which were gradually moulding the destinies of Christendom, with the vulgar conflicts of ordinary warfare, so often no more than gladiatorial trials of national prowess. The victories of England in this stupendous contest rose of themselves as natural *Te Deums* to heaven; and it was felt by the thoughtful that such victories, at such a crisis of general prostration, were not more beneficial to ourselves than finally to France, our enemy, and to the nations of all western or central Europe, through whose pusillanimity it was that the French domination had prospered.

The mail-coach, as the national organ for publishing these mighty events thus diffusively influential, became itself a spiritualised and glorified object to an impassioned heart; and naturally, in the Oxford of that day, *all* hearts were impassioned, as being all (or nearly all) in *early* manhood. In most universities there is one single college; in Oxford there were five-and-twenty, all of which were peopled by young men, the *élite* of their own generation; not boys, but men; none under eighteen. In some of these many colleges, the custom permitted the student to keep what are called "short terms;" that is, the four terms of Michaelmas, Lent, Easter, and Act, were kept by a residence, in the aggregate, of ninety-one days, or thirteen weeks. Under this interrupted residence, it was possible that a student might have a reason for going down to his home four times in the year. This made eight journeys to and fro. But, as these homes lay dispersed through all the shires of the island, and most of us disdained all coaches except his majesty's mail,

no city out of London could pretend to so extensive a connection with Mr. Palmer's establishment as Oxford. Three mails, at the least, I remember as passing every day through Oxford, and benefiting by my personal patronage—viz., the Worcester, the Gloucester, and the Holyhead mail. Naturally, therefore, it became a point of some interest with us, whose journeys revolved every six weeks on an average, to look a little into the executive details of the system. With some of these Mr. Palmer had no concern; they rested upon bye-laws enacted by posting-houses for their own benefit, and upon other bye-laws, equally stern, enacted by the inside passengers for the illustration of their own haughty exclusiveness. These last were of a nature to rouse our scorn, from which the transition was not very long to systematic mutiny. Up to this time, say 1804, or 1805 (the year of Trafalgar), it had been the fixed assumption of the four inside people (as an old tradition of all public carriages derived from the reign of Charles II.), that they, the illustrious quaternion, constituted a porcelain variety of the human race, whose dignity would have been compromised by exchanging one word of civility with the three miserable delf-ware outsides. Even to have kicked an outsider, might have been held to attaint the foot concerned in that operation; so that, perhaps, it would have required an act of Parliament to restore its purity of blood. What words, then, could express the horror, and the sense of treason, in that case, which *had* happened, where all three outsides (the trinity of Pariahs) made a vain attempt to sit down at the same breakfast-table or dinner-table with the consecrated four? I myself witnessed such an attempt; and on that occasion a benevolent old gentleman endeavoured to soothe his three holy associates, by suggesting that, if the outsides were indicted for this criminal attempt at the next assizes, the court would regard it as a case of lunacy, or *delirium tremens*, rather than of treason. England owes much of her grandeur to the depth of the aristocratic element in her social composition, when pulling against her strong democracy. I am not the man to laugh at it. But sometimes, undoubtedly, it expressed itself in comic shapes. The course taken with the infatuated outsiders, in the particular attempt which I have noticed, was, that the waiter, beckoning them away from the privileged *salle-à-manger*, sang out, "This way, my good men," and then enticed these good men away to the kitchen. But that plan had not always answered. Sometimes, though rarely, cases occurred where the intruders, being stronger

than usual, or more vicious than usual, resolutely refused to budge, and so far carried their point, as to have a separate table arranged for themselves in a corner of the general room. Yet, if an Indian screen could be found ample enough to plant them out from the very eyes of the high table, or *dais*, it then became possible to assume as a fiction of law—that the three delf fellows, after all, were not present. They could be ignored by the porcelain men, under the maxim, that objects not appearing, and not existing, are governed by the same logical construction.[1]

Such being, at that time, the usages of mail-coaches, what was to be done by us of young Oxford? We, the most aristocratic of people, who were addicted to the practice of looking down superciliously even upon the insides themselves as often very questionable characters—were we, by voluntarily going outside, to court indignities? If our dress and bearing sheltered us, generally, from the suspicion of being "raff" (the name at that period for "snobs"[2]) we really *were* such constructively, by the place we assumed. If we did not submit to the deep shadow of eclipse, we entered at least the skirts of its penumbra. And the analogy of theatres was valid against us, where no man can complain of the annoyances incident to the pit or gallery, having his instant remedy in paying the higher price of the boxes. But the soundness of this analogy we disputed. In the case of the theatre, it cannot be pretended that the inferior situations have any separate attractions, unless the pit may be supposed to have an advantage for the purposes of the critic or the dramatic reporter. But the critic or reporter is a rarity. For most people, the sole benefit is in the price. Now, on the contrary, the outside of the mail had its own incommunicable advantages. These we could not forego. The higher price we would willingly have paid, but not the price connected with the condition of riding inside; which condition we pronounced insufferable. The air, the freedom of prospect, the proximity to the horses, the elevation of seat—these were what we required; but, above all, the certain anticipation of purchasing occasional opportunities of driving.

Such was the difficulty which pressed us; and under the

[1] *De non apparentibus*, etc.

[2] "*Snobs*," and its antithesis, "*nobs*," arose among the internal factions of shoemakers perhaps ten years later. Possibly enough, the terms may have existed much earlier; but they were then first made known, picturesquely and effectively, by a trial at some assizes which happened to fix the public attention.

coercion of this difficulty, we instituted a searching inquiry into the true quality and valuation of the different apartments about the mail. We conducted this inquiry on metaphysical principles; and it was ascertained satisfactorily, that the roof of the coach, which by some weak men had been called the attics, and by some the garrets, was in reality the drawing-room; in which drawing-room the box was the chief ottoman or sofa; whilst it appeared that the *inside*, which had been traditionally regarded as the only room tenantable by gentlemen, was, in fact, the coal-cellar in disguise.

Great wits jump. The very same idea had not long before struck the celestial intellect of China. Amongst the presents carried out by our first embassy to that country was a state-coach. It had been specially selected as a personal gift by George III.; but the exact mode of using it was an intense mystery to Pekin. The ambassador, indeed (Lord Macartney), had made some imperfect explanations upon this point; but, as his excellency communicated these in a diplomatic whisper, at the very moment of his departure, the celestial intellect was very feebly illuminated, and it became necessary to call a cabinet council on the grand state question, "Where was the Emperor to sit?" The hammer-cloth happened to be unusually gorgeous; and partly on that consideration, but partly also because the box offered the most elevated seat, was nearest to the moon, and undeniably went foremost, it was resolved by acclamation that the box was the imperial throne, and for the scoundrel who drove, he might sit where he could find a perch. The horses, therefore, being harnessed, solemnly his imperial majesty ascended his new English throne under a flourish of trumpets, having the first lord of the treasury on his right hand, and the chief jester on his left. Pekin gloried in the spectacle; and in the whole flowery people, constructively present by representation, there was but one discontented person, and *that* was the coachman. This mutinous individual audaciously shouted, "Where am *I* to sit?" But the privy council, incensed by his disloyalty unanimously opened the door and kicked him into the inside. He had all the inside places to himself; but such is the rapacity of ambition, that he was still dissatisfied. "I say," he cried out in an extempore petition, addressed to the emperor through the window—"I say, how am I to catch hold of the reins?"—"Anyhow," was the imperial answer; "don't trouble *me*, man, in my glory. How catch the reins? Why, through the windows, through the keyholes—

*any*how." Finally this contumacious coachman lengthened the check-strings into a sort of jury-reins, communicating with the horses; with these he drove as steadily as Pekin had any right to expect. The emperor returned after the briefest of circuits; he descended in great pomp from his throne, with the severest resolution never to remount it. A public thanksgiving was ordered for his majesty's happy escape from the disease of broken neck; and the state-coach was dedicated thenceforward as a votive offering to the god Fo, Fo—whom the learned more accurately called Fi, Fi.

A revolution of this same Chinese character did young Oxford of that era effect in the constitution of mail-coach society. It was a perfect French revolution; and we had good reason to say, *ça ira*. In fact, it soon became *too* popular. The "public"—a well known character, particularly disagreeable, though slightly respectable, and notorious for affecting the chief seats in synagogues—had at first loudly opposed this revolution; but when the opposition showed itself to be ineffectual, our disagreeable friend went into it with headlong zeal. At first it was a sort of race between us; and, as the public is usually from thirty to fifty years old, naturally we of young Oxford, that averaged about twenty, had the advantage. Then the public took to bribing, giving fees to horse-keepers, etc., who hired out their persons as warming-pans on the box-seat. *That*, you know, was shocking to all moral sensibilities. Come to bribery, said we, and there is an end to all morality, Aristotle's, Zeno's, Cicero's, or anybody's. And, besides, of what use was it? For *we* bribed also. And as our bribes to those of the public were as five shillings to sixpence, here again young Oxford had the advantage. But the contest was ruinous to the principles of the stables connected with the mails. This whole corporation was constantly bribed, rebribed, and often surrebribed; a mail-coach yard was like the hustings in a contested election; and a horse-keeper, ostler, or helper, was held by the philosophical at that time to be the most corrupt character in the nation.

There was an impression upon the public mind, natural enough from the continually augmenting velocity of the mail, but quite erroneous, that an outside seat on this class of carriages was a post of danger. On the contrary, I maintained that, if a man had become nervous from some gipsy prediction in his childhood, allocating to a particular moon now approaching some unknown danger, and he should inquire earnestly,

"Whither can I fly for shelter? Is a prison the safest retreat? or a lunatic hospital? or the British Museum?" I should have replied, "Oh, no; I'll tell you what to do. Take lodgings for the next forty days on the box of his majesty's mail. Nobody can touch you there. If it is by bills at ninety days after date that you are made unhappy—if noters and protesters are the sort of wretches whose astrological shadows darken the house of life—then note you what I vehemently protest—viz., that no matter though the sheriff and under-sheriff in every county should be running after you with his *posse*, touch a hair of your head he cannot whilst you keep house, and have your legal domicile on the box of the mail. It is felony to stop the mail; even the sheriff cannot do that. And an *extra* touch of the whip to the leaders (no great matter if it grazes the sheriff) at any time guarantees your safety." In fact, a bedroom in a quiet house seems a safe enough retreat, yet it is liable to its own notorious nuisances—to robbers by night, to rats, to fire. But the mail laughs at these terrors. To robbers, the answer is packed up and ready for delivery in the barrel of the guard's blunderbuss. Rats again!—there *are* none about mail-coaches, any more than snakes in Von Troil's Iceland;[1] except, indeed, now and then a parliamentary rat, who always hides his shame in what I have shown to be the "coal-cellar." And as to fire, I never knew but one in a mail-coach, which was in the Exeter mail, and caused by an obstinate sailor bound to Devonport. Jack, making light of the law and the law-giver that had set their faces against his offence, insisted on taking up a forbidden seat[2] in the rear of the roof, from which he could exchange his

[1] "*Von Troil's Iceland:*"—The allusion is to a well-known chapter in Von Troil's work, entitled, "Concerning the Snakes of Iceland." The entire chapter consists of these six words—"*There are no snakes in Iceland.*"

[2] "*Forbidden seat:*"—The very sternest code of rules was enforced upon the mails by the Post-office. Throughout England, only three outsides were allowed, of whom one was to sit on the box, and the other two immediately behind the box; none, under any pretext, to come near the guard; an indispensable caution; since else, under the guise of passenger, a robber might by any one of a thousand advantages—which sometimes are created, but always are favoured, by the animation of frank social intercourse—have disarmed the guard. Beyond the Scottish border, the regulation was so far relaxed as to allow of *four* outsides, but not relaxed at all as to the mode of placing them. One, as before, was seated on the box, and the other three on the front of the roof, with a determinate and ample separation from the little insulated chair of the guard. This relaxation was conceded by way of compensating to Scotland her disadvantages in point of population. England, by the superoir density of her population, might always count upon a large fund of profits in the fractional trips of chance passengers riding for short distances of two or

own yarns with those of the guard. No greater offence was then known to mail-coaches; it was treason, it was *læsa majestas*, it was by tendency arson; and the ashes of Jack's pipe, falling amongst the straw of the hinder boot containing the mail-bags, raised a flame which (aided by the wind of our motion) threatened a revolution in the republic of letters. Yet even this left the sanctity of the box unviolated. In dignified repose, the coachman and myself sat on, resting with benign composure upon our knowledge that the fire would have to burn its way through four inside passengers before it could reach ourselves. I remarked to the coachman, with a quotation from Virgil's *Æneid* really too hackneyed—

"Jam proximus ardet
Ucalegon."

But, recollecting that the Virgilian part of the coachman's education might have been neglected, I interpreted so far as to say, that perhaps at that moment the flames were catching hold of our worthy brother and inside passenger, Ucalegon. The coachman made no answer, which is my own way when a stranger addresses me either in Syriac or in Coptic, but by his faint sceptical smile he seemed to insinuate that he knew better; for that Ucalegon, as it happened, was not in the way-bill, and therefore could not have been booked.

No dignity is perfect which does not at some point ally itself with the mysterious. The connection of the mail with the state and the executive government—a connection obvious, but yet not strictly defined—gave to the whole mail establishment an official grandeur which did us service on the roads, and invested us with seasonable terrors. Not the less impressive were those terrors, because their legal limits were imperfectly ascertained. Look at those turnpike gates; with what deferential hurry, with what an obedient start, they fly open at our approach! Look at that long line of carts and carters ahead, audaciously usurping the very crest of the road. Ah! traitors, they do not hear us as yet; but, as soon as the dreadful blast of our horn reaches them with proclamation of our approach, see with what frenzy of trepidation they fly to their horses' heads, and deprecate our wrath by the precipitation of their crane-neck quarterings. Treason they feel to be their crime; each individual carter feels himself under the ban of confiscation and attainder;

three stages. In Scotland this chance counted for much less. And therefore, to make good the deficiency, Scotland was allowed a compensatory profit upon one *extra* passenger.

his blood is attainted through six generations; and nothing is wanting but the headsman and his axe, the block and the sawdust, to close up the vista of his horrors. What! shall it be within benefit of clergy to delay the king's message on the high road?—to interrupt the great respirations, ebb and flood, *systole* and *diastole*, of the national intercourse?—to endanger the safety of tidings, running day and night between all nations and languages? Or can it be fancied, amongst the weakest of men, that the bodies of the criminals will be given up to their widows for Christian burial? Now the doubts which were raised as to our powers did more to wrap them in terror, by wrapping them in uncertainty, than could have been effected by the sharpest definitions of the law from the Quarter Sessions. We, on our parts (we, the collective mail, I mean), did our utmost to exalt the idea of our privileges by the insolence with which we wielded them. Whether this insolence rested upon law that gave it a sanction, or upon conscious power that haughtily dispensed with that sanction, equally it spoke from a potential station and the agent, in each particular insolence of the moment, was viewed reverentially, as one having authority.

Sometimes after breakfast his majesty's mail would become frisky; and in its difficult wheelings amongst the intricacies of early markets, it would upset an apple-cart, a cart loaded with eggs, etc. Huge was the affliction and dismay, awful was the smash. I, as far as possible, endeavoured in such a case to represent the conscience and moral sensibilities of the mail; and, when wildernesses of eggs were lying poached under our horses' hoofs, then would I stretch forth my hands in sorrow, saying (in words too celebrated at that time, from the false echoes[1] of Marengo), "Ah! wherefore have we not time to weep over you?" which was evidently impossible, since, in fact, we had not time to laugh over them. Tied to post-office allowance, in some cases of fifty minutes for eleven miles, could the royal mail pretend to undertake the offices of sympathy and condolence? Could it be expected to provide tears for the accidents of the road? If even it seemed to trample on humanity, it did so, I felt, in discharge of its own more peremptory duties.

Upholding the morality of the mail, *à fortiori* I upheld its

[1] "*False echoes:*"—Yes, false! for the words ascribed to Napoleon, as breathed to the memory of Desaix, never were uttered at all. They stand in the same category of theatrical fictions as the cry of the foundering line-of-battle ship *Vengeur*, as the vaunt of General Cambronne at Waterloo, "*La Garde meurt, mais ne se rend pas*," or as the repartees of Talleyrand.

rights; as a matter of duty, I stretched to the uttermost its privilege of imperial precedency, and astonished weak minds by the feudal powers which I hinted to be lurking constructively in the charters of this proud establishment. Once I remember being on the box of the Holyhead mail, between Shrewsbury and Oswestry, when a tawdry thing from Birmingham, some "Tallyho" or "Highflyer," all flaunting with green and gold, came up alongside of us. What a contrast to our royal simplicity of form and colour in this plebeian wretch! The single ornament on our dark ground of chocolate colour was the mighty shield of the imperial arms, but emblazoned in proportions as modest as a signet-ring bears to a seal of office. Even this was displayed only on a single pannel, whispering, rather than proclaiming, our relations to the mighty state; whilst the beast from Birmingham, our green-and-gold friend from false, fleeting, perjured Brummagem, had as much writing and painting on its sprawling flanks as would have puzzled a decipherer from the tombs of Luxor. For some time this Birmingham machine ran along by our side—a piece of familiarity that already of itself seemed to me sufficiently jacobinical. But all at once a movement of the horses announced a desperate intention of leaving us behind. "Do you see *that?*" I said to the coachman.—"I see," was his short answer. He was wide awake, yet he waited longer than seemed prudent; for the horses of our audacious opponent had a disagreeable air of freshness and power. But his motive was loyal; his wish was, that the Birmingham conceit should be full-blown before he froze it. When *that* seemed right, he unloosed, or, to speak by a stronger word, he *sprang*, his known resources: he slipped our royal horses like cheetahs, or hunting-leopards, after the affrighted game. How they could retain such a reserve of fiery power after the work they had accomplished, seemed hard to explain. But on our side, besides the physical superiority, was a tower of moral strength, namely, the king's name, "which they upon the adverse faction wanted." Passing them without an effort, as it seemed, we threw them into the rear with so lengthening an interval between us, as proved in itself the bitterest mockery of their presumption; whilst our guard blew back a shattering blast of triumph, that was really too painfully full of derision.

I mention this little incident for its connection with what followed. A Welsh rustic, sitting behind me, asked if I had not felt my heart burn within me during the progress of the race? I said, with philosophical calmness, *No;* because we

were not racing with a mail, so that no glory could be gained. In fact, it was sufficiently mortifying that such a Birmingham thing should dare to challenge us. The Welshman replied, that he didn't see *that;* for that a cat might look at a king, and a Brummagem coach might lawfully race the Holyhead mail. "*Race* us, if you like," I replied, "though even *that* has an air of sedition, but not *beat* us. This would have been treason; and for its own sake I am glad that the 'Tallyho' was disappointed." So dissatisfied did the Welshman seem with this opinion, that at last I was obliged to tell him a very fine story from one of our elder dramatists—viz., that once, in some far oriental kingdom, when the sultan of all the land, with his princes, ladies, and chief omrahs, were flying their falcons, a hawk suddenly flew at a majestic eagle; and in defiance of the eagle's natural advantages, in contempt also of the eagle's traditional royalty, and before the whole assembled field of astonished spectators from Agra and Lahore, killed the eagle on the spot. Amazement seized the sultan at the unequal contest, and burning admiration for its unparalleled result. He commanded that the hawk should be brought before him; he caressed the bird with enthusiasm; and he ordered that, for the commemoration of his matchless courage, a diadem of gold and rubies should be solemnly placed on the hawk's head; but then that, immediately after this solemn coronation, the bird should be led off to execution, as the most valiant indeed of traitors, but not the less a traitor, as having dared to rise rebelliously against his liege lord and anointed sovereign, the eagle. "Now," said I to the Welshman, "to you and me, as men of refined sensibilities, how painful it would have been that this poor Brummagem brute, the 'Tallyho,' in the impossible case of a victory over us, should have been crowned with Birmingham tinsel, with paste diamonds, and Roman pearls, and then led off to instant execution." The Welshman doubted if that could be warranted by law. And when I hinted at the 6th of Edward Longshanks, chap. 18, for regulating the precedency of coaches, as being probably the statute relied on for the capital punishment of such offences, he replied drily, that if the attempt to pass a mail really were treasonable, it was a pity that the "Tallyho" appeared to have so imperfect an acquaintance with law.

The modern modes of travelling cannot compare with the old mail-coach system in grandeur and power. They boast of more velocity, not, however, as a consciousness, but as a fact

of our lifeless knowledge, resting upon *alien* evidence; as, for instance, because somebody *says* that we have gone fifty miles in the hour, though we are far from feeling it as a personal experience, or upon the evidence of a result, as that actually we find ourselves in York four hours after leaving London. Apart from such an assertion, or such a result, I myself am little aware of the pace. But, seated on the old mail-coach, we needed no evidence out of ourselves to indicate the velocity. On this system the word was, *Non magna loquimur*, as upon railways, but *vivimus*. Yes, "magna *vivimus*;" we do not make verbal ostentation of our grandeurs, we realise our grandeurs in act, and in the very experience of life. The vital experience of the glad animal sensibilities made doubt impossible on the question of our speed; we heard our speed, we saw it, we felt it as a thrilling; and this speed was not the product of blind insensate agencies, that had no sympathy to give, but was incarnated in the fiery eyeballs of the noblest amongst brutes, in his dilated nostril, spasmodic muscles, and thunder-beating hoofs. The sensibility of the horse, uttering itself in the maniac light of his eye, might be the last vibration of such a movement; the glory of Salamanca might be the first. But the intervening links that connected them, that spread the earthquake of battle into the eyeball of the horse, were the heart of man and its electric thrillings—kindling in the rapture of the fiery strife, and then propagating its own tumults by contagious shouts and gestures to the heart of his servant the horse.

But now, on the new system of travelling, iron tubes and boilers have disconnected man's heart from the ministers of his locomotion. Nile nor Trafalgar has power to raise an extra bubble in a steam-kettle. The galvanic cycle is broken up for ever; man's imperial nature no longer sends itself forward through the electric sensibility of the horse; the inter-agencies are gone in the mode of communication between the horse and his master, out of which grew so many aspects of sublimity under accidents of mists that hid, or sudden blazes that revealed, of mobs that agitated, or midnight solitudes that awed. Tidings, fitted to convulse all nations, must henceforwards travel by culinary process; and the trumpet that once announced from afar the laurelled mail, heart-shaking, when heard screaming on the wind, and proclaiming itself through the darkness to every village or solitary house on its route, has now given way for ever to the pot-wallopings of the boiler.

Thus have perished multiform openings for public expressions

of interest, scenical yet natural, in great national tidings; for revelations of faces and groups that could not offer themselves amongst the fluctuating mobs of a railway station. The gatherings of gazers about a laurelled mail had one centre, and acknowledged one sole interest. But the crowds attending at a railway station have as little unity as running water, and own as many centres as there are separate carriages in the train.

How else, for example, than as a constant watcher for the dawn, and for the London mail that in summer months entered about daybreak amongst the lawny thickets of Marlborough forest, couldst thou, sweet Fanny of the Bath road have become the glorified inmate of my dreams? Yet Fanny, as the loveliest young woman for face and person that perhaps in my whole life I have beheld, merited the station which even now, from a distance of forty years, she holds in my dreams; yes, though by links of natural association she brings along with her a troop of dreadful creatures, fabulous and not fabulous, that are more abominable to the heart, than Fanny and the dawn are delightful.

Miss Fanny of the Bath road, strictly speaking, lived at a mile's distance from that road; but came so continually to meet the mail, that I on my frequent transits rarely missed her, and naturally connected her image with the great thoroughfare where only I had ever seen her. Why she came so punctually, I do not exactly know; but I believe with some burden of commissions to be executed in Bath, which had gathered to her own residence as a central rendezvous for converging them. The mail-coachman who drove the Bath mail, and wore the royal livery,[1] happened to be Fanny's grandfather. A good man he was, that loved his beautiful grand-daughter; and, loving her wisely, was vigilant over her deportment in any case where young Oxford might happen to be concerned. Did my vanity then suggest that I myself, individually, could fall within the line of his terrors? Certainly not, as regarded any physical pretensions that I could plead; for Fanny (as a chance passenger from her own neighbourhood once told me) counted in her train

[1] "*Wore the royal livery:*"—The general impression was, that the royal livery belonged of right to the mail-coachmen as their professional dress. But that was an error. To the guard it *did* belong, I believe, and was obviously essential as an official warrant, and as a means of instant identification for his person, in the discharge of his important public duties. But the coachman, and especially if his place in the series did not connect him immediately with London and the General Post-office, obtained the scarlet coat only as an honorary distinction after long (or, if not long, trying and special) service.

a hundred and ninety-nine professed admirers, if not open aspirants to her favour; and probably not one of the whole brigade but excelled myself in personal advantages. Ulysses even, with the unfair advantage of his accursed bow, could hardly have undertaken that amount of suitors. So the danger might have seemed slight—only that woman is universally aristocratic; it is amongst her nobilities of heart that she *is* so. Now, the aristocratic distinctions in my favour might easily with Miss Fanny have compensated my physical deficiencies. Did I then make love to Fanny? Why, yes; about as much love as one *could* make whilst the mail was changing horses—a process which, ten years later, did not occupy above eighty seconds; but *then*—viz., about Waterloo—it occupied five times eighty. Now, four hundred seconds offer a field quite ample enough for whispering into a young woman's ear a great deal of truth, and (by way of parenthesis) some trifle of falsehood. Grandpapa did right, therefore, to watch me. And yet, as happens too often to the grandpapas of earth, in a contest with the admirers of grand-daughters, how vainly would he have watched me had I meditated any evil whispers to Fanny! She, it is my belief, would have protected herself against any man's evil suggestions. But he, as the result showed, could not have intercepted the opportunities for such suggestions. Yet, why not? Was he not active? Was he not blooming? Blooming he was as Fanny herself.

"Say, all our praises why should lords—"

Stop, that's not the line.

"Say, all our roses why should girls engross?"

The coachman showed rosy blossoms on his face deeper even than his granddaughter's—*his* being drawn from the ale cask, Fanny's from the fountains of the dawn. But, in spite of his blooming face, some infirmities he had; and one particularly in which he too much resembled a crocodile. This lay in a monstrous inaptitude for turning round. The crocodile, I presume, owes that inaptitude to the absurd *length* of his back; but in our grandpapa it arose rather from the absurd *breadth* of his back, combined, possibly, with some growing stiffness in his legs. Now, upon this crocodile infirmity of his I planted a human advantage for tendering my homage to Miss Fanny. In defiance of all his honourable vigilance, no sooner had he presented to us his mighty Jovian back (what a field for displaying to mankind his royal scarlet!), whilst inspecting professionally

the buckles, the straps, and the silvery turrets [1] of his harness, than I raised Miss Fanny's hand to my lips, and, by the mixed tenderness and respectfulness of my manner, caused her easily to understand how happy it would make me to rank upon her list as No. 10 or 12, in which case a few casualties amongst her lovers (and observe, they *hanged* liberally in those days) might have promoted me speedily to the top of the tree; as, on the other hand, with how much loyalty of submission I acquiesced by anticipation in her award, supposing that she should plant me in the very rear-ward of her favour, as No. 199+1. Most truly I loved this beautiful and ingenuous girl; and had it not been for the Bath mail, timing all courtships by post-office allowance, heaven only knows what might have come of it. People talk of being over head and ears in love; now, the mail was the cause that I sank only over ears in love, which, you know, still left a trifle of brain to overlook the whole conduct of the affair.

Ah, reader! when I look back upon those days, it seems to me that all things change—all things perish. "Perish the roses and the palms of kings:" perish even the crowns and trophies of Waterloo: thunder and lightning are not the thunder and lightning which I remember. Roses are degenerating. The Fannies of our island—though this I say with reluctance—are not visibly improving; and the Bath road is notoriously superannuated. Crocodiles, you will say, are stationary. Mr. Waterton tells me that the crocodile does *not* change; that a cayman, in fact, or an alligator, is just as good for riding upon as he was in the time of the Pharaohs. *That* may be; but the reason is, that the crocodile does not live fast—he is a slow coach. I believe it is generally understood among naturalists, that the crocodile is a blockhead. It is my own impression that the Pharaohs were also blockheads. Now, as the Pharaohs and the crocodile domineered over Egyptian society, this accounts for a singular mistake that prevailed through innumerable generations on the Nile. The crocodile made the ridiculous blunder of supposing man to be meant chiefly for his own eating. Man, taking a different view of the subject, naturally met that mistake by another: he viewed the crocodile as a thing some-

[1] "*Turrets:*"—As one who loves and venerates Chaucer for his unrivalled merits of tenderness, of picturesque characterisation, and of narrative skill, I noticed with great pleasure that the word *torrettes* is used by him to designate the little devices through which the reins are made to pass. This same word, in the same exact sense, I heard uniformly used by many scores of illustrious mail-coachmen, to whose confidential friendship I had the honour of being admitted in my younger days.

times to worship, but always to run away from. And this continued until Mr. Waterton [1] changed the relations between the animals. The mode of escaping from the reptile he showed to be, not by running away, but by leaping on its back, booted and spurred. The two animals had misunderstood each other. The use of the crocodile has now been cleared up—viz., to be ridden; and the final cause of man is, that he may improve the health of the crocodile by riding him a fox-hunting before breakfast. And it is pretty certain that any crocodile, who has been regularly hunted through the season, and is master of the weight he carries, will take a six-barred gate now as well as ever he would have done in the infancy of the pyramids.

If, therefore, the crocodile does *not* change, all things else undeniably *do:* even the shadow of the pyramids grows less. And often the restoration in vision of Fanny and the Bath road, makes me too pathetically sensible of that truth. Out of the darkness, if I happen to call back the image of Fanny, up rises suddenly from a gulf of forty years a rose in June; or, if I think for an instant of the rose in June, up rises the heavenly face of Fanny. One after the other, like the antiphonies in the choral service, rise Fanny and the rose in June, then back again the rose in June and Fanny. Then come both together, as in a chorus—roses and Fannies, Fannies and roses, without end, thick as blossoms in paradise. Then comes a venerable crocodile, in a royal livery of scarlet and gold, with sixteen capes; and the crocodile is driving four-in-hand from the box of the Bath mail. And suddenly we upon the mail are pulled up by a mighty dial, sculptured with the hours, that mingle with the heavens and the heavenly host. Then all at once we are arrived at Marlborough forest, amongst the lovely households [2] of the

[1] "*Mr. Waterton:*"—Had the reader lived through the last generation, he would not need to be told that some thirty or thirty-five years back, Mr. Waterton, a distinguished country gentleman of ancient family in Northumberland, publicly mounted and rode in top-boots a savage old crocodile, that was restive and very impertinent, but all to no purpose. The crocodile jibbed and tried to kick, but vainly. He was no more able to throw the squire than Sinbad was to throw the old scoundrel who used his back without paying for it, until he discovered a mode (slightly immoral, perhaps, though some think not) of murdering the old fraudulent jockey, and so circuitously of unhorsing him.

[2] "*Households:*"—Roe-deer do not congregate in herds like the fallow or the red deer, but by separate families, parents and children; which feature of approximation to the sanctity of human hearths, added to their comparatively miniature and graceful proportions, conciliate to them an interest of peculiar tenderness, supposing even that this beautiful creature is less characteristically impressed with the grandeurs of savage and forest life.

roe-deer; the deer and their fawns retire into the dewy thickets; the thickets are rich with roses; once again the roses call up the sweet countenance of Fanny; and she, being the granddaughter of a crocodile, awakens a dreadful host of semi-legendary animals—griffins, dragons, basilisks, sphinxes—till at length the whole vision of fighting images crowds into one towering armorial shield, a vast emblazonry of human charities and human loveliness that have perished, but quartered heraldically with unutterable and demoniac natures, whilst over all rises, as a surmounting crest, one fair female hand, with the forefinger pointing, in sweet, sorrowful admonition, upwards to heaven, where is sculptured the eternal writing which proclaims the frailty of earth and her children.

GOING DOWN WITH VICTORY

But the grandest chapter of our experience, within the whole mail-coach service, was on those occasions when we went down from London with the news of victory. A period of about ten years stretched from Trafalgar to Waterloo; the second and third years of which period (1806 and 1807) were comparatively sterile; but the other nine (from 1805 to 1815 inclusively) furnished a long succession of victories; the least of which, in such a contest of Titans, had an inappreciable value of position partly for its absolute interference with the plans of our enemy, but still more from its keeping alike through central Europe the sense of a deep-seated vulnerability in France. Even to tease the coasts of our enemy, to mortify them by continual blockades, to insult them by capturing if it were but a baubling schooner under the eyes of their arrogant armies, repeated from time to time a sullen proclamation of power lodged in one quarter to which the hopes of Christendom turned in secret. How much more loudly must this proclamation have spoken in the audacity[1] of having bearded the *élite* of their troops, and having

[1] "*Audacity:*"—Such the French accounted it; and it has struck me that Soult would not have been so popular in London, at the period of her present Majesty's coronation, or in Manchester, on occasion of his visit to that town, if they had been aware of the insolence with which he spoke of us in notes written at intervals from the field of Waterloo. As though it had been mere felony in our army to look a French one in the face, he said in more notes than one, dated from two to four p.m. on the field of Waterloo, "Here are the English—we have them; they are caught *en flagrant délit.*". Yet no man should have known us better; no man had drunk deeper from the cup of humiliation than Soult had in 1809, when ejected by us with headlong violence from Oporto, and pursued through a

beaten them in pitched battles! Five years of life it was worth paying down for the privilege of an outside place on a mail-coach, when carrying down the first tidings of any such event. And it is to be noted that, from our insular situation, and the multitude of our frigates disposable for the rapid transmission of intelligence, rarely did any unauthorised rumour steal away a prelibation from the first aroma of the regular despatches. The government news was generally the earliest news.

From eight p.m., to fifteen or twenty minutes later, imagine the mails assembled on parade in Lombard Street, where, at that time,[1] and not in St. Martin's-le-Grand, was seated the General Post-office. In what exact strength we mustered I do not remember; but, from the length of each separate *attelage*, we filled the street, though a long one, and though we were drawn up in double file. On *any* night the spectacle was beautiful. The absolute perfection of all the appointments about the carriages and the harness, their strength, their brilliant cleanliness, their beautiful simplicity—but, more than all, the royal magnificence of the horses—were what might first have fixed the attention. Every carriage, on every morning in the year, was taken down to an official inspector for examination—wheels, axles, linchpins, pole, glasses, lamps, were all critically probed and tested. Every part of every carriage had been cleaned, every horse had been groomed, with as much rigour as if they belonged to a private gentleman; and that part of the spectacle offered itself always. But the night before us is a night of victory; and, behold! to the ordinary display, what a heart-shaking addition!—horses, men, carriages, all are dressed in laurels and flowers, oak-leaves and ribbons. The guards, as being officially his majesty's servants, and of the coachmen such as are within the privilege of the post-office, wear the royal liveries of course; and as it is summer (for all the *land* victories were naturally won in summer), they wear, on this fine evening, these liveries exposed to view, without any covering of upper coats. Such a costume, and the elaborate arrangement of the laurels in their hats, dilate their hearts, by giving to them openly a personal connection with the great news, in which already they have the general interest of patriotism. That great national sentiment surmounts and quells all sense of ordinary distinctions. Those passengers who happen to be gentlemen are now

long line of wrecks to the frontier of Spain; subsequently at Albuera, in the bloodiest of recorded battles, to say nothing of Toulouse, he should have learned our pretensions.

[1] "*At that time:*"—I speak of the era previous to Waterloo.

hardly to be distinguished as such except by dress; for the usual reserve of their manner in speaking to the attendants has on this night melted away. One heart, one pride, one glory, connects every man by the transcendant bond of his national blood. The spectators, who are numerous beyond precedent, express their sympathy with these fervent feelings by continual hurrahs. Every moment are shouted aloud by the post-office servants, and summoned to draw up, the great ancestral names of cities known to history through a thousand years—Lincoln, Winchester, Portsmouth, Gloucester, Oxford, Bristol, Manchester, York, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Perth, Stirling, Aberdeen—expressing the grandeur of the empire by the antiquity of its towns, and the grandeur of the mail establishment by the diffusive radiation of its separate missions. Every moment you hear the thunder of lids locked down upon the mail-bags. That sound to each individual mail is the signal for drawing off, which process is the finest part of the entire spectacle. Then come the horses into play. Horses! can these be horses that bound off with the action and gestures of leopards? What stir!—what sea-like ferment!—what a thundering of wheels!—what a trampling of hoofs!—what a sounding of trumpets!—what farewell cheers—what redoubling peals of brotherly congratulation, connecting the name of the particular mail—"Liverpool for ever!"—with the name of the particular victory—"Badajoz for ever!" or "Salamanca for ever!" The half-slumbering consciousness that, all night long, and all the next day—perhaps for even a longer period—many of these mails, like fire racing along a train of gunpowder, will be kindling at every instant new successions of burning joy, has an obscure effect of multiplying the victory itself, by multiplying to the imagination into infinity the stages of its progressive diffusion. A fiery arrow seems to be let loose, which from that moment is destined to travel, without intermission, westwards for three hundred[1] miles—northwards for six hundred; and

[1] "*Three hundred:*"—Of necessity, this scale of measurement, to an American, if he happens to be a thoughtless man, must sound ludicrous. Accordingly, I remember a case in which an American writer indulges himself in the luxury of a little fibbing, by ascribing to an Englishman a pompous account of the Thames, constructed entirely upon American ideas of grandeur, and concluding in something like these terms:—"And, sir, arriving at London, this mighty father of rivers attains a breadth of at least two furlongs, having, in its winding course, traversed the astonishing distance of one hundred and seventy miles." And this the candid American thinks it fair to contrast with the scale of the Mississippi. Now, it is hardly worth while to answer a pure fiction gravely, else one might say that no Englishman out of Bedlam ever thought of looking in an island for

the sympathy of our Lombard Street friends at parting is exalted a hundredfold by a sort of visionary sympathy with the yet slumbering sympathies which in so vast a succession we are going to awake.

Liberated from the embarrassments of the city, and issuing into the broad uncrowded avenues of the northern suburbs, we soon begin to enter upon our natural pace of ten miles an hour. In the broad light of the summer evening, the sun, perhaps, only just at the point of setting, we are seen from every storey of every house. Heads of every age crowd to the windows—young and old understand the language of our victorious symbols—and rolling volleys of sympathising cheers run along us, behind us, and before us. The beggar, rearing himself against the wall, forgets his lameness—real or assumed—thinks not of his whining trade, but stands erect, with bold exulting smiles, as we pass him. The victory has healed him, and says, Be thou whole! Women and children, from garrets alike and cellars, through infinite London, look down or look up with loving eyes upon our gay ribbons and our martial laurels; sometimes kiss their hands; sometimes hang out, as signals of affection, pocket-handkerchiefs, aprons, dusters, anything that, by catching the summer breezes, will express an aerial jubilation. On the London side of Barnet, to which we draw near within a few minutes after nine, observe that private carriage which is approaching us. The weather being so warm, the glasses are all down; and one may read, as on the stage of a theatre, everything that goes on within. It contains three ladies—one likely to be "mamma," and two of seventeen or eighteen, who are probably her daughters. What lovely animation, what beauti-

the rivers of a continent; nor, consequently, could have thought of looking for the peculiar grandeur of the Thames in the length of its course, or in the extent of soil which it drains; yet, if he *had* been so absurd, the American might have recollected that a river, not to be compared with the Thames even as to volume of water—viz. the Tiber—has contrived to make itself heard of in this world for twenty-five centuries to an extent not reached as yet by any river, however corpulent, of his own land. The glory of the Thames is measured by the destiny of the population to which it ministers, by the commerce which it supports, by the grandeur of the empire in which, though far from the largest, it is the most influential stream. Upon some such scale, and not by a transfer of Columbian standards, is the course of our English mails to be valued. The American may fancy the effect of his own valuations to our English ears, by supposing the case of a Siberian glorifying his country in these terms:—"These wretches, sir, in France and England, cannot march half a mile in any direction without finding a house where food can be had and lodging; whereas, such is the noble desolation of our magnificent country, that in many a direction for a thousand miles, I will engage that a dog shall not find shelter from a snowstorm, nor a wren find an apology for breakfast."

ful unpremeditated pantomime, explaining to us every syllable that passes, in these ingenuous girls! By the sudden start and raising of the hands, on first discovering our laurelled equipage! —by the sudden movement and appeal to the elder lady from both of them—and by the heightened colour on their animated countenances, we can almost hear them saying, "See, see! Look at their laurels! Oh, mamma! there has been a great battle in Spain; and it has been a great victory." In a moment we are on the point of passing them. We passengers—I on the box, and the two on the roof behind me—raise our hats to the ladies; the coachman makes his professional salute with the whip; the guard even, though punctilious on the matter of his dignity as an officer under the crown, touches his hat. The ladies move to us, in return, with a winning graciousness of gesture; all smile on each side in a way that nobody could misunderstand, and that nothing short of a grand national sympathy could so instantaneously prompt. Will these ladies say that we are nothing to *them?* Oh, no; they will not say *that.* They cannot deny—they do not deny—that for this night they are our sisters; gentle or simple, scholar or illiterate servant, for twelve hours to come, we on the outside have the honour to be their brothers. Those poor women, again, who stop to gaze upon us with delight at the entrance of Barnet, and seem, by their air of weariness, to be returning from labour—do you mean to say that they are washerwomen and charwomen? Oh, my poor friend, you are quite mistaken. I assure you they stand in a far higher rank; for this one night they feel themselves by birth-right to be daughters of England, and answer to no humbler title.

Every joy, however, even rapturous joy—such is the sad law of earth—may carry with it grief, or fear of grief, to some. Three miles beyond Barnet, we see approaching us another private carriage, nearly repeating the circumstances of the former case. Here, also, the glasses are all down—here, also, is an elderly lady seated; but the two daughters are missing; for the single young person sitting by the lady's side, seems to be an attendant—so I judge from her dress, and her air of respectful reserve. The lady is in mourning; and her countenance expresses sorrow. At first she does not look up; so that I believe she is not aware of our approach, until she hears the measured beating of our horses' hoofs. Then she raises her eyes to settle them painfully on our triumphal equipage. Our decorations explain the case to her at once; but she beholds

them with apparent anxiety, or even with terror. Some time before this, I, finding it difficult to hit a flying mark, when embarrassed by the coachman's person and reins intervening, had given to the guard a *Courier* evening paper, containing the gazette, for the next carriage that might pass. Accordingly he tossed it in, so folded that the huge capitals expressing some such legend as—GLORIOUS VICTORY, might catch the eye at once. To see the paper, however, at all, interpreted as it was by our ensigns of triumph, explained everything; and, if the guard were right in thinking the lady to have received it with a gesture of horror, it could not be doubtful that she had suffered some deep personal affliction in connection with this Spanish war.

Here, now, was the case of one who, having formerly suffered, might, erroneously perhaps, be distressing herself with anticipations of another similar suffering. That same night, and hardly three hours later, occurred the reverse case. A poor woman, who too probably would find herself, in a day or two, to have suffered the heaviest of afflictions by the battle, blindly allowed herself to express an exultation so unmeasured in the news and its details, as gave to her the appearance which amongst Celtic Highlanders is called *fey*. This was at some little town where we changed horses an hour or two after midnight. Some fair or wake had kept the people out of their beds, and had occasioned a partial illumination of the stalls and booths, presenting an unusual but very impressive effect. We saw many lights moving about as we drew near; and perhaps the most striking scene on the whole route was our reception at this place. The flashing of torches and the beautiful radiance of blue lights (technically, Bengal lights) upon the heads of our horses; the fine effect of such a showery and ghostly illumination falling upon our flowers and glittering laurels;[1] whilst all around ourselves, that formed a centre of light, the darkness gathered on the rear and flanks in massy blackness; these optical splendours, together with the prodigious enthusiasm of the people, composed a picture at once scenical and affecting, theatrical and holy. As we stayed for three or four minutes, I alighted; and immediately from a dismantled stall in the street, where no doubt she had been presiding through the earlier part of the night, advanced eagerly a middle-aged woman. The sight of my newspaper it was that had drawn her attention upon myself.

[1] "*Glittering laurels:*"—I must observe, that the colour of *green* suffers almost a spiritual change and exaltation under the effect of Bengal lights.

The victory which we were carrying down to the provinces on *this* occasion, was the imperfect one of Talavera—imperfect for its results, such was the virtual treachery of the Spanish general, Cuesta, but not imperfect in its ever-memorable heroism. I told her the main outline of the battle. The agitation of her enthusiasm had been so conspicuous when listening, and when first applying for information, that I could not but ask her if she had not some relative in the Peninsular army. Oh, yes; her only son was there. In what regiment? He was a trooper in the 23rd Dragoons. My heart sank within me as she made that answer. This sublime regiment, which an Englishman should never mention without raising his hat to their memory, had made the most memorable and effective charge recorded in military annals. They leaped their horses—*over* a trench where they could, *into* it, and with the result of death or mutilation when they could *not*. What proportion cleared the trench is nowhere stated. Those who *did*, closed up and went down upon the enemy with such divinity of fervour (I use the word *divinity* by design: the inspiration of God must have prompted this movement to those whom even then He was calling to His presence), that two results followed. As regarded the enemy, this 23rd Dragoons, not, I believe, originally three hundred and fifty strong, paralysed a French column, six thousand strong, then ascended the hill, and fixed the gaze of the whole French army. As regarded themselves, the 23rd were supposed at first to have been barely not annihilated; but eventually, I believe, about one in four survived. And this, then, was the regiment—a regiment already for some hours glorified and hallowed to the ear of all London, as lying stretched, by a large majority, upon one bloody aceldama—in which the young trooper served whose mother was now talking in a spirit of such joyous enthusiasm. Did I tell her the truth? Had I the heart to break up her dreams? No. To-morrow, said I to myself—to-morrow, or the next day, will publish the worst. For one night more, wherefore should she not sleep in peace? After to-morrow, the chances are too many that peace will forsake her pillow. This brief respite, then, let her owe to *my* gift and *my* forbearance. But, if I told her not of the bloody price that had been paid, not, therefore, was I silent on the contributions from her son's regiment to that day's service and glory. I showed her not the funeral banners under which the noble regiment was sleeping. I lifted not the overshadowing laurels from the bloody trench in which horse and rider lay mangled together.

But I told her how these dear children of England, officers and privates, had leaped their horses over all obstacles as gaily as hunters to the morning's chase. I told her how they rode their horses into the mists of death (saying to myself, but not saying to *her*), and laid down their young lives for thee, O mother England! as willingly—poured out their noble blood as cheerfully—as ever, after a long day's sport, when infants, they had rested their wearied heads upon their mother's knees, or had sunk to sleep in her arms. Strange it is, yet true, that she seemed to have no fears for her son's safety, even after this knowledge that the 23rd Dragoons had been memorably engaged; but so much was she enraptured by the knowledge that *his* regiment, and therefore that *he*, had rendered conspicuous service in the dreadful conflict—a service which had actually made them, within the last twelve hours, the foremost topic of conversation in London—so absolutely was fear swallowed up in joy—that, in the mere simplicity of her fervent nature, the poor woman threw her arms round my neck, as she thought of her son, and gave to *me* the kiss which secretly was meant for *him*.

SECTION THE SECOND

THE VISION OF SUDDEN DEATH

WHAT is to be taken as the predominant opinion of man, reflective and philosophic, upon SUDDEN DEATH? It is remarkable that, in different conditions of society, sudden death has been variously regarded as the consummation of an earthly career most fervently to be desired, or, again, as that consummation which is with most horror to be deprecated. Cæsar the Dictator, at his last dinner party (*cæna*), on the very evening before his assassination, when the minutes of his earthly career were numbered, being asked what death, in *his* judgment, might be pronounced the most eligible, replied, "That which should be most sudden." On the other hand, the divine Litany of our English Church, when breathing forth supplications, as if in some representative character for the whole human race prostrate before God, places such a death in the very van of horrors:—"From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from SUDDEN DEATH—*Good Lord, deliver us.*" Sudden death is here made to crown

the climax in a grand ascent of calamities; it is ranked among the last of curses; and yet, by the noblest of Romans, it was ranked as the first of blessings. In that difference, most readers will see little more than the essential difference between Christianity and Paganism. But this, on consideration, I doubt. The Christian Church may be right in its estimate of sudden death; and it is a natural feeling, though after all it may also be an infirm one, to wish for a quiet dismissal from life—as that which *seems* most reconcilable with meditation, with penitential retrospects, and with the humilities of farewell prayer. There does not, however, occur to me any direct scriptural warrant for this earnest petition of the English Litany, unless under a special construction of the word "sudden." It seems a petition —indulged rather than conceded to human infirmity, than exacted from human piety. It is not so much a doctrine built upon the eternities of the Christian system, as a plausible opinion built upon special varieties of physical temperament. Let that, however, be as it may, two remarks suggest themselves as prudent restraints upon a doctrine, which else *may* wander, and *has* wandered, into an uncharitable superstition. The first is this: that many people are likely to exaggerate the horror of a sudden death, from the disposition to lay a false stress upon words or acts, simply because by an accident they have become *final* words or acts. If a man dies, for instance, by some sudden death when he happens to be intoxicated, such a death is falsely regarded with peculiar horror; as though the intoxication were suddenly exalted into a blasphemy. But *that* is unphilosophic. The man was, or he was not, *habitually* a drunkard. If not, if his intoxication were a solitary accident, there can be no reason for allowing special emphasis to this act, simply because through misfortune it became his final act. Nor, on the other hand, if it were no accident, but one of his *habitual* transgressions, will it be the more habitual or the more a transgression, because some sudden calamity, surprising him, has caused this habitual transgression to be also a final one. Could the man have had any reason even dimly to foresee his own sudden death, there would have been a new feature in his act of intemperance—a feature of presumption and irreverence, as in one that, having known himself drawing near to the presence of God, should have suited his demeanour to an expectation so awful. And the only new element in the man's act is not any element of special immorality, but simply of special misfortune.

The other remark has reference to the meaning of the word

sudden. Very possibly Cæsar and the Christian Church do not differ in the way supposed; that is, do not differ by any difference of doctrine as between Pagan and Christian views of the moral temper appropriate to death, but perhaps they are contemplating different cases. Both contemplate a violent death, a βιαθανατος—death that is βιαιος, or, in other words, death that is brought about, not by internal and spontaneous change, but by active force having its origin from without. In this meaning the two authorities agree. Thus far they are in harmony. But the difference is, that the Roman by the word "sudden" means *unlingering;* whereas the Christian Litany by "sudden death" means a death *without warning,* consequently without any available summons to religious preparation. The poor mutineer, who kneels down to gather into his heart the bullets from twelve firelocks of his pitying comrades, dies by a most sudden death in Cæsar's sense; one shock, one mighty spasm, one (possibly *not* one) groan, and all is over. But, in the sense of the Litany, the mutineer's death is far from sudden; his offence originally, his imprisonment, his trial, the interval between his sentence and its execution, having all furnished him with separate warnings of his fate—having all summoned him to meet it with solemn preparation.

Here at once, in this sharp verbal distinction, we comprehend the faithful earnestness with which a holy Christian Church pleads on behalf of her poor departing children, that God would vouchsafe to them the last great privilege and distinction possible on a death-bed—viz., the opportunity of untroubled preparation for facing this mighty trial. Sudden death, as a mere variety in the modes of dying, where death in some shape is inevitable, proposes a question of choice which, equally in the Roman and the Christian sense, will be variously answered according to each man's variety of temperament. Meantime, one aspect of sudden death there is, one modification, upon which no doubt can arise, that of all martyrdoms it is the most agitating—viz., where it surprises a man under circumstances which offer (or which seem to offer) some hurrying, flying, inappreciably minute chance of evading it. Sudden as the danger which it affronts, must be any effort by which such an evasion can be accomplished. Even *that,* even the sickening necessity for hurrying in extremity where all hurry seems destined to be vain, even that anguish is liable to a hideous exasperation in one particular case—viz., where the appeal is made not exclusively to the instinct of self-preservation, but

to the conscience, on behalf of some other life besides your own accidentally thrown upon *your* protection. To fail, to collapse in a service merely your own, might seem comparatively venial; though, in fact, it is far from venial. But to fail in a case where Providence has suddenly thrown into your hands the final interests of another—a fellow-creature shuddering between the gates of life and death; this, to a man of apprehensive conscience, would mingle the misery of an atrocious criminality with the misery of a bloody calamity. You are called upon, by the case supposed, possibly to die; but to die at the very moment when, by any even partial failure, or effeminate collapse of your energies, you will be self-denounced as a murderer. You had but the twinkling of an eye for your effort, and that effort might have been unavailing; but to have risen to the level of such an effort, would have rescued you, though not from dying, yet from dying as a traitor to your final and farewell duty.

The situation here contemplated exposes a dreadful ulcer, lurking far down in the depths of human nature. It is not that men generally are summoned to face such awful trials. But potentially, and in shadowy outline, such a trial is moving subterraneously in perhaps all men's natures. Upon the secret mirror of our dreams such a trial is darkly projected, perhaps, to every one of us. That dream, so familiar to childhood, of meeting a lion, and, through languishing prostration in hope and the energies of hope, that constant sequel of lying down before the lion, publishes the secret frailty of human nature—reveals its deep-seated falsehood to itself—records its abysmal treachery. Perhaps not one of us escapes that dream; perhaps, as by some sorrowful doom of man, that dream repeats for every one of us, through every generation, the original temptation in Eden. Every one of us, in this dream, has a bait offered to the infirm places of his own individual will; once again a snare is presented for tempting him into captivity to a luxury of ruin; once again, as in aboriginal Paradise, the man falls by his own choice; again, by infinite iteration, the ancient earth groans to Heaven, through her secret caves, over the weakness of her child: "Nature, from her seat, sighing through all her works," again "gives signs of woe that all is lost;" and again the counter sigh is repeated to the sorrowing heavens for the endless rebellion against God. It is not without probability that in the world of dreams every one of us ratifies for himself the original transgression. In dreams, perhaps under some secret conflict of the

midnight sleeper, lighted up to the consciousness at the time, but darkened to the memory as soon as all is finished, each several child of our mysterious race completes for himself the treason of the aboriginal fall.

. . . . . .

The incident, so memorable in itself by its features of horror, and so scenical by its grouping for the eye, which furnished the text for this reverie upon *Sudden Death*, occurred to myself in the dead of night, as a solitary spectator, when seated on the box of the Manchester and Glasgow mail, in the second or third summer after Waterloo. I find it necessary to relate the circumstances, because they are such as could not have occurred unless under a singular combination of accidents. In those days, the oblique and lateral communications with many rural post-offices were so arranged, either through necessity or through defect of system, as to make it requisite for the main north-western mail (*i.e.* the *down* mail), on reaching Manchester, to halt for a number of hours; how many, I do not remember; six or seven, I think; but the result was, that, in the ordinary course, the mail recommenced its journey northwards about midnight. Wearied with the long detention at a gloomy hotel, I walked out about eleven o'clock at night for the sake of fresh air; meaning to fall in with the mail and resume my seat at the post-office. The night, however, being yet dark, as the moon had scarcely risen, and the streets being at that hour empty, so as to offer no opportunities for asking the road, I lost my way; and did not reach the post-office until it was considerably past midnight; but, to my great relief (as it was important for me to be in Westmoreland by the morning), I saw in the huge saucer eyes of the mail, blazing through the gloom, an evidence that my chance was not yet lost. Past the time it was; but, by some rare accident, the mail was not even yet ready to start. I ascended to my seat on the box, where my cloak was still lying as it had lain at the Bridgewater Arms. I had left it there in imitation of a nautical discoverer, who leaves a bit of bunting on the shore of his discovery, by way of warning off the ground the whole human race, and notifying to the Christian and heathen worlds, with his best compliments, that he has hoisted his pocket-handkerchief once and for ever upon that virgin soil; thenceforward claiming the *jus dominii* to the top of the atmosphere above it, and also the right of driving shafts to the centre of the earth below it; so that all people found after this warning, either aloft in upper chambers

of the atmosphere, or groping in subterraneous shafts, or squatting audaciously on the surface of the soil, will be treated as trespassers—kicked, that is to say, or decapitated, as circumstances may suggest, by their very faithful servant, the owner of the said pocket-handkerchief. In the present case, it is probable that my cloak might not have been respected, and the *jus gentium* might have been cruelly violated in my person—for, in the dark, people commit deeds of darkness, gas being a great ally of morality—but it so happened that, on this night, there was no other outside passenger; and thus the crime, which else was but too probable, missed fire for want of a criminal.

Having mounted the box, I took a small quantity of laudanum, having already travelled two hundred and fifty miles—viz., from a point seventy miles beyond London. In the taking of laudanum there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident it drew upon me the special attention of my assessor on the box, the coachman. And in *that* also there was nothing extraordinary. But by accident, and with great delight, it drew my own attention to the fact that this coachman was a monster in point of bulk, and that he had but one eye. In fact, he had been foretold by Virgil as

"Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens cui lumen ademptum."

He answered to the conditions in every one of the items:—1, a monster he was; 2, dreadful; 3, shapeless; 4, huge; 5, who had lost an eye. But why should *that* delight me? Had he been one of the Calendars in the *Arabian Nights*, and had paid down his eye as the price of his criminal curiosity, what right had *I* to exult in his misfortune? I did *not* exult: I delighted in no man's punishment, though it were even merited. But these personal distinctions (Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) identified in an instant an old friend of mine, whom I had known in the south for some years as the most masterly of mail-coachmen. He was the man in all Europe that could (if *any* could) have driven six-in-hand full gallop over *Al Sirat*—that dreadful bridge of Mahomet, with no side battlements, and of *extra* room not enough for a razor's edge—leading right across the bottomless gulf. Under this eminent man, whom in Greek I cognominated Cyclops *diphrélates* (Cyclops the charioteer), I, and others known to me, studied the diphrelatic art. Excuse, reader, a word too elegant to be pedantic. As a pupil, though I paid extra fee, it is to be lamented that I did not stand high in his esteem. It showed his dogged honesty (though, observe, not

his discernment), that he could not see my merits. Let us excuse his absurdity in this particular, by remembering his want of an eye. Doubtless *that* made him blind to my merits. In the art of conversation, however, he admitted that I had the whip-hand of him. On this present occasion, great joy was at our meeting. But what was Cyclops doing here? Had the medical men recommended northern air, or how? I collected, from such explanations as he volunteered, that he had an interest at stake in some suit-at-law now pending at Lancaster; so that probably he had got himself transferred to this station, for the purpose of connecting with his professional pursuits an instant readiness for the calls of his lawsuit.

Meantime, what are we stopping for? Surely we have now waited long enough. Oh, this procrastinating mail, and this procrastinating post-office! Can't they take a lesson upon that subject from *me?* Some people have called *me* procrastinating. Yet you are witness, reader, that I was here kept waiting for the post-office. Will the post-office lay its hand on its heart, in its moments of sobriety, and assert that ever it waited for me? What are they about? The guard tells me that there is a large extra accumulation of foreign mails this night, owing to irregularities caused by war, by wind, by weather, in the packet service, which as yet does not benefit at all by steam. For an *extra* hour, it seems, the post-office has been engaged in threshing out the pure wheaten correspondence of Glasgow, and winnowing it from the chaff of all baser intermediate towns. But at last all is finished. Sound your horn, guard. Manchester, good-bye; we've lost an hour by your criminal conduct at the post-office: which, however, though I do not mean to part with a serviceable ground of complaint, and one which really *is* such for the horses, to me secretly is an advantage, since it compels us to look sharply for this lost hour amongst the next eight or nine, and to recover it (if we can) at the rate of one mile extra per hour. Off we are at last, and at eleven miles an hour; and for the moment I detect no changes in the energy or in the skill of Cyclops.

From Manchester to Kendal, which virtually (though not in law) is the capital of Westmoreland, there were at this time seven stages of eleven miles each. The first five of these, counting from Manchester, terminate in Lancaster, which is therefore fifty-five miles north of Manchester, and the same distance exactly from Liverpool. The first three stages terminate in Preston (called, by way of distinction from other towns

of that name, *proud* Preston), at which place it is that the separate roads from Liverpool and from Manchester to the north become confluent.[1] Within these first three stages lay the foundation, the progress, and termination of our night's adventure. During the first stage, I found out that Cyclops was mortal: he was liable to the shocking affection of sleep—a thing which previously I had never suspected. If a man indulges in the vicious habit of sleeping, all the skill in aurigation of Apollo himself, with the horses of Aurora to execute his notions, avail him nothing. "Oh, Cyclops!" I exclaimed, "thou art mortal. My friend, thou snorest." Through the first eleven miles, however, this infirmity—which I grieve to say that he shared with the whole Pagan Pantheon—betrayed itself only by brief snatches. On waking up, he made an apology for himself, which, instead of mending matters, laid open a gloomy vista of coming disasters. The summer assizes, he reminded me, were now going on at Lancaster: in consequence of which, for three nights and three days, he had not lain down in a bed. During the day, he was waiting for his own summons as a witness on the trial in which he was interested; or else, lest he should be missing at the critical moment, was drinking with the other witnesses, under the pastoral surveillance of the attorneys. During the night, or that part of it which at sea would form the middle watch, he was driving. This explanation certainly accounted for his drowsiness, but in a way which made it much more alarming; since now, after several days' resistance to this infirmity, at length he was steadily giving way. Throughout the second stage he grew more and more drowsy. In the second mile of the third stage, he surrendered himself finally and without a struggle to his perilous temptation. All his past resistance had but deepened the weight of this final oppression. Seven atmospheres of sleep rested upon him; and to consummate the case, our worthy guard, after singing "Love amongst the Roses" for perhaps thirty times, without invitation, and without applause, had in revenge moodily resigned himself to slumber—not so deep, doubtless, as the coachman's, but deep enough for mischief. And thus at last, about ten miles from

[1] "*Confluent:*"—Suppose a capital Y (the Pythagorean letter): Lancaster is at the foot of this letter; Liverpool at the top of the *right* branch; Manchester at the top of the *left;* proud Preston at the centre, where the two branches unite. It is thirty-three miles along either of the two branches; it is twenty-two miles along the stem—viz. from Preston in the middle, to Lancaster at the root. There's a lesson in geography for the reader.

Preston, it came about that I found myself left in charge of his Majesty's London and Glasgow mail, then running at the least twelve miles an hour.

What made this negligence less criminal than else it must have been thought, was the condition of the roads at night during the assizes. At that time, all the law business of populous Liverpool, and also of populous Manchester, with its vast cincture of populous rural districts, was called up by ancient usage to the tribunal of Lilliputian Lancaster. To break up this old traditional usage required, 1, a conflict with powerful established interests; 2, a large system of new arrangements; and 3, a new parliamentary statute. But as yet this change was merely in contemplation. As things were at present, twice in the year [1] so vast a body of business rolled northwards, from the southern quarter of the county, that for a fortnight at least it occupied the severe exertions of two judges in its despatch. The consequence of this was, that every horse available for such a service, along the whole line of road, was exhausted in carrying down the multitudes of people who were parties to the different suits. By sunset, therefore, it usually happened that, through utter exhaustion amongst men and horses, the road sank into profound silence. Except the exhaustion in the vast adjacent county of York from a contested election, no such silence succeeding to no such fiery uproar was ever witnessed in England.

On this occasion, the usual silence and solitude prevailed along the road. Not a hoof nor a wheel was to be heard. And to strengthen this false luxurious confidence in the noiseless roads, it happened also that the night was one of peculiar solemnity and peace. For my own part, though slightly alive to the possibilities of peril, I had so far yielded to the influence of the mighty calm as to sink into a profound reverie. The month was August, in the middle of which lay my own birthday—a festival to every thoughtful man suggesting solemn and often sigh-born [2] thoughts. The county was my own native county—upon which, in its southern section, more than upon any equal area known to man past or present, had descended the original curse of labour in its heaviest form, not mastering the bodies only of men as of slaves, or criminals in mines, but

[1] "*Twice in the year:*"—There were at that time only two assizes even in the most popular counties—viz. the Lent Assizes and the Summer Assizes.

[2] "*Sigh-born:*"—I owe the suggestion of this word to an obscure remembrance of a beautiful phrase in *Giraldus Cambrensis*"—viz. *suspiriosæ cogitationes.*

working through the fiery will. Upon no equal space of earth was, or ever had been, the same energy of human power put forth daily. At this particular season also of the assizes, that dreadful hurricane of flight and pursuit, as it might have seemed to a stranger, which swept to and from Lancaster all day long, hunting the county up and down, and regularly subsiding back into silence about sunset, could not fail (when united with this permanent distinction of Lancashire as the very metropolis and citadel of labour) to point the thoughts pathetically upon that counter vision of rest, of saintly repose from strife and sorrow, towards which, as to their secret haven, the profounder aspirations of man's heart are in solitude continually travelling. Obliquely upon our left we were nearing the sea, which also must, under the present circumstances, be repeating the general state of halcyon repose. The sea, the atmosphere, the light, bore each an orchestral part in this universal lull. Moonlight, and the first timid tremblings of the dawn, were by this time blending; and the blendings were brought into a still more exquisite state of unity by a slight silvery mist, motionless and dreamy, that covered the woods and fields, but with a veil of equable transparency. Except the feet of our own horses, which, running on a sandy margin of the road, made but little disturbance, there was no sound abroad. In the clouds, and on the earth, prevailed the same majestic peace; and in spite of all that the villain of a schoolmaster has done for the ruin of our sublimer thoughts, which are the thoughts of our infancy, we still believe in no such nonsense as a limited atmosphere. Whatever we may swear with our false feigning lips, in our faithful hearts we still believe, and must for ever believe, in fields of air traversing the total gulf between earth and the central heavens. Still, in the confidence of children that tread without fear *every* chamber in their father's house, and to whom no door is closed, we, in that Sabbatic vision which sometimes is revealed for an hour upon nights like this, ascend with easy steps from the sorrow-stricken fields of earth, upwards to the sandals of God.

Suddenly, from thoughts like these, I was awakened to a sullen sound, as of some motion on the distant road. It stole upon the air for a moment; I listened in awe; but then it died away. Once roused, however, I could not but observe with alarm the quickened motion of our horses. Ten years' experience had made my eye learned in the valuing of motion; and I saw that we were now running thirteen miles an hour. I pretend to no presence of mind. On the contrary, my fear is,

that I am miserably and shamefully deficient in that quality as regards action. The palsy of doubt and distraction hangs like some guilty weight of dark unfathomed remembrances upon my energies, when the signal is flying for *action*. But, on the other hand, this accursed gift I have, as regards *thought*, that in the first step towards the possibility of a misfortune, I see its total evolution; in the radix of the series I see too certainly and too instantly its entire expansion; in the first syllable of the dreadful sentence, I read already the last. It was not that I feared for ourselves. *Us*, our bulk and impetus charmed against peril in any collision. And I had ridden through too many hundreds of perils that were frightful to approach, that were matter of laughter to look back upon, the first face of which was horror—the parting face a jest, for any anxiety to rest upon *our* interests. The mail was not built, I felt assured, nor bespoke, that could betray *me* who trusted to its protection. But any carriage that we could meet would be frail and light in comparison of ourselves. And I remarked this ominous accident of our situation. We were on the wrong side of the road. But then, it may be said, the other party, if other there was, might also be on the wrong side; and two wrongs might make a right. *That* was not likely. The same motive which had drawn *us* to the right-hand side of the road—viz., the luxury of the soft beaten sand, as contrasted with the paved centre—would prove attractive to others. The two adverse carriages would therefore, to a certainty, be travelling on the same side; and from this side, as not being ours in law, the crossing over to the other would, of course, be looked for from *us*.[1] Our lamps, still lighted, would give the impression of vigilance on our part. And every creature that met us, would rely upon *us* for quartering.[2] All this, and if the separate links of the anticipation had been a thousand times more, I saw, not discursively, or by effort, or by succession, but by one flash of horrid simultaneous intuition.

Under this steady though rapid anticipation of the evil which *might* be gathering ahead, ah! what a sullen mystery of fear, what a sigh of woe, was that which stole upon the air, as again

[1] It is true that, according to the law of the case as established by legal precedents, all carriages were required to give way before Royal equipages, and therefore before the mail as one of them. But this only increased the danger, as being a regulation very imperfectly made known, very unequally enforced, and therefore often embarrassing the movements on both sides.

[2] "*Quartering:*"—This is the technical word, and, I presume, derived from the French *cartayer*, to evade a rut or any obstacle.

the far-off sound of a wheel was heard! A whisper it was—a whisper from, perhaps, four miles off—secretly announcing a ruin that, being foreseen, was not the less inevitable; that, being known, was not, therefore, healed. What could be done? —who was it that could do it—to check the storm-flight of these maniacal horses? Could I not seize the reins from the grasp of the slumbering coachman? You, reader, think that it would have been in *your* power to do so. And I quarrel not with your estimate of yourself. But, from the way in which the coachman's hand was viced between his upper and lower thigh, this was impossible. Easy, was it? See, then, that bronze equestrian statue. The cruel rider has kept the bit in his horse's mouth for two centuries. Unbridle him, for a minute, if you please, and wash his mouth with water. Easy, was it? Unhorse me, then, that imperial rider; knock me those marble feet from those marble stirrups of Charlemagne.

The sounds ahead strengthened, and were now too clearly the sounds of wheels. Who and what could it be? Was it industry in a taxed cart? Was it youthful gaiety in a gig? Was it sorrow that loitered, or joy that raced? For as yet the snatches of sound were too intermitting, from distance, to decipher the character of the motion. Whoever were the travellers, something must be done to warn them. Upon the other party rests the active responsibility, but upon *us*—and, woe is me! that *us* was reduced to my frail opium-shattered self —rests the responsibility of warning. Yet, how should this be accomplished? Might I not sound the guard's horn? Already, on the first thought, I was making my way over the roof to the guard's seat. But this, from the accident which I have mentioned, of the foreign mails' being piled upon the roof, was a difficult and even dangerous attempt to one cramped by nearly three hundred miles of outside travelling. And, fortunately, before I had lost much time in the attempt, our frantic horses swept round an angle of the road, which opened upon us that final stage where the collision must be accomplished, and the catastrophe sealed. All was apparently finished. The court was sitting; the case was heard; the judge had finished; and only the verdict was yet in arrear.

Before us lay an avenue, straight as an arrow, six hundred yards, perhaps, in length; and the umbrageous trees, which rose in a regular line from either side, meeting high overhead, gave to it the character of a cathedral aisle. These trees lent a deeper solemnity to the early light; but there was still light

enough to perceive, at the further end of this Gothic aisle, a frail reedy gig, in which were seated a young man, and by his side a young lady. Ah, young sir! what are you about? If it is requisite that you should whisper your communications to this young lady—though really I see nobody, at an hour and on a road so solitary, likely to overhear you—is it therefore requisite that you should carry your lips forward to hers? The little carriage is creeping on at one mile an hour; and the parties within it being thus tenderly engaged, are naturally bending down their heads. Between them and eternity, to all human calculation, there is but a minute and a half. Oh heavens! what is it that I shall do? Speaking or acting, what help can I offer? Strange it is, and to a mere auditor of the tale might seem laughable, that I should need a suggestion from the *Iliad* to prompt the sole resource that remained. Yet so it was. Suddenly I remembered the shout of Achilles, and its effect. But could I pretend to shout like the son of Peleus, aided by Pallas? No: but then I needed not the shout that should alarm all Asia militant; such a shout would suffice as might carry terror into the hearts of two thoughtless young people, and one gig-horse. I shouted—and the young man heard me not. A second time I shouted—and now he heard me, for now he raised his head.

Here, then, all had been done that, by me, *could* be done: more on *my* part was not possible. Mine had been the first step; the second was for the young man; the third was for God. If, said I, this stranger is a brave man, and if, indeed, he loves the young girl at his side—or, loving her not, if he feels the obligation, pressing upon every man worthy to be called a man, of doing his utmost for a woman confided to his protection—he will, at least, make some effort to save her. If *that* fails, he will not perish the more, or by a death more cruel, for having made it; and he will die as a brave man should, with his face to the danger, and with his arm about the woman that he sought in vain to save. But, if he makes no effort, shrinking, without a struggle, from his duty, he himself will not the less certainly perish for this baseness of poltroonery. He will die no less: and why not? Wherefore should we grieve that there is one craven less in the world? No; *let* him perish, without a pitying thought of ours wasted upon him; and, in that case, all our grief will be reserved for the fate of the helpless girl who now, upon the least shadow of failure in *him*, must, by the fiercest of translations—must, without time for a prayer—must, within seventy seconds, stand before the judgment-seat of God.

But craven he was not: sudden had been the call upon him, and sudden was his answer to the call. He saw, he heard, he comprehended, the ruin that was coming down: already its gloomy shadow darkened above him; and already he was measuring his strength to deal with it. Ah! what a vulgar thing does courage seem, when we see nations buying it and selling it for a shilling a day: ah! what a sublime thing does courage seem, when some fearful summons on the great deeps of life carries a man, as if running before a hurricane, up to the giddy crest of some tumultuous crisis, from which lie two courses, and a voice says to him audibly, "One way lies hope; take the other, and mourn for ever!" How grand a triumph, if, even then, amidst the raving of all around him, and the frenzy of the danger, the man is able to confront his situation—is able to retire for a moment into solitude with God, and to seek his counsel from *Him!*

For seven seconds, it might be, of his seventy, the stranger settled his countenance steadfastly upon us, as if to search and value every element in the conflict before him. For five seconds more of his seventy he sat immovably, like one that mused on some great purpose. For five more, perhaps, he sat with eyes upraised, like one that prayed in sorrow, under some extremity of doubt, for light that should guide him to the better choice. Then suddenly he rose; stood upright; and by a powerful strain upon the reins, raising his horse's fore-feet from the ground, he slewed him round on the pivot of his hind-legs, so as to plant the little equipage in a position nearly at right angles to ours. Thus far his condition was not improved; except as a first step had been taken towards the possibility of a second. If no more were done, nothing was done; for the little carriage still occupied the very centre of our path, though in an altered direction. Yet even now it may not be too late: fifteen of the seventy seconds may still be unexhausted; and one almighty bound may avail to clear the ground. Hurry, then, hurry! for the flying moments—*they* hurry! Oh, hurry, hurry, my brave young man! for the cruel hoofs of our horses—*they* also hurry! Fast are the flying moments, faster are the hoofs of our horses. But fear not for *him*, if human energy can suffice; faithful was he that drove to his terrific duty; faithful was the horse to *his* command. One blow, one impulse given with voice and hand, by the stranger, one rush from the horse, one bound as if in the act of rising to a fence, landed the docile creature's fore-feet upon the crown or arching centre of the road. The larger half of the little equipage had then cleared our over-

towering shadow: *that* was evident even to my own agitated sight. But it mattered little that one wreck should float off in safety, if upon the wreck that perished were embarked the human freightage. The rear part of the carriage—was *that* certainly beyond the line of absolute ruin? What power could answer the question? Glance of eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, and divide the one from the other? Light does not tread upon the steps of light more indivisibly than did our all-conquering arrival upon the escaping efforts of the gig. *That* must the young man have felt too plainly. His back was now turned to us; not by sight could he any longer communicate with the peril; but by the dreadful rattle of our harness, too truly had his ear been instructed—that all was finished as regarded any further effort of *his*. Already in resignation he had rested from his struggle; and perhaps in his heart he was whispering, "Father, which art in heaven, do Thou finish above what I on earth have attempted." Faster than ever mill-race we ran past them in our inexorable flight. Oh, raving of hurricanes that must have sounded in their young ears at the moment of our transit! Even in that moment the thunder of collision spoke aloud. Either with the swingle-bar, or with the haunch of our near leader, we had struck the off-wheel of the little gig, which stood rather obliquely, and not quite so far advanced, as to be accurately parallel with the near-wheel. The blow, from the fury of our passage, resounded terrifically. I rose in horror, to gaze upon the ruins we might have caused. From my elevated station I looked down, and looked back upon the scene, which in a moment told its own tale, and wrote all its records on my heart for ever.

Here was the map of the passion that now had finished. The horse was planted immovably, with his fore-feet upon the paved crest of the central road. He of the whole party might be supposed untouched by the passion of death. The little cany carriage—partly, perhaps, from the violent torsion of the wheels in its recent movement, partly from the thundering blow we had given to it—as if it sympathised with human horror, was all alive with tremblings and shiverings. The young man trembled not, nor shivered. He sat like a rock. But *his* was the steadiness of agitation frozen into rest by horror. As yet he dared not to look round; for he knew that, if anything remained to do, by him it could no longer be done. And as yet he knew not for certain if their safety were accomplished. But the lady——

But the lady——! Oh, heavens! will that spectacle ever depart from my dreams, as she rose and sank upon her seat, sank and rose, threw up her arms wildly to heaven, clutched at some visionary object in the air, fainting, praying, raving, despairing? Figure to yourself, reader, the elements of the case; suffer me to recall before your mind the circumstances of that unparalleled situation. From the silence and deep peace of this saintly summer night—from the pathetic blending of this sweet moonlight, dawnlight, dreamlight—from the manly tenderness of this flattering, whispering, murmuring love—suddenly as from the woods and fields—suddenly as from the chambers of the air opening in revelation—suddenly as from the ground yawning at her feet, leaped upon her, with the flashing of cataracts, Death the crowned phantom, with all the equipage of his terrors, and the tiger roar of his voice.

The moments were numbered; the strife was finished; the vision was closed. In the twinkling of an eye, our flying horses had carried us to the termination of the umbrageous aisle; at right angles we wheeled into our former direction; the turn of the road carried the scene out of my eyes in an instant, and swept it into my dreams for ever.

SECTION THE THIRD

DREAM-FUGUE

FOUNDED ON THE PRECEDING THEME OF SUDDEN DEATH

"Whence the sound
Of instruments, that made melodious chime,
Was heard, of harp and organ; and who moved
Their stops and chords, was seen; his volant touch
Instinct through all proportions, low and high,
Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue."

Par. Lost, B. xi.

Tumultuosissimamente

PASSION of sudden death! that once in youth I read and interpreted by the shadows of thy averted signs![1]—rapture of panic taking the shape (which amongst tombs in churches I have seen) of woman bursting her sepulchral bonds—of woman's Ionic form bending forward from the ruins of her grave with arching foot, with eyes upraised, with clasped adoring hands—

[1] "*Averted signs:*"—I read the course and changes of the lady's agony in the succession of her involuntary gestures; but it must be remembered that I read all this from the rear, never once catching the lady's full face, and even her profile imperfectly.

waiting, watching, trembling, praying for the trumpet's call to rise from dust for ever! Ah, vision too fearful of shuddering humanity on the brink of almighty abysses!—vision that didst start back, that didst reel away, like a shrivelling scroll from before the wrath of fire racing on the wings of the wind! Epilepsy so brief of horror, wherefore is it that thou canst not die? Passing so suddenly into darkness, wherefore is it that still thou sheddest thy sad funeral blights upon the gorgeous mosaics of dreams? Fragment of music too passionate, heard once, and heard no more, what aileth thee, that thy deep rolling chords come up at intervals through all the worlds of sleep, and after forty years, have lost no element of horror?

I

Lo, it is summer—almighty summer! The everlasting gates of life and summer are thrown open wide; and on the ocean, tranquil and verdant as a savannah, the unknown lady from the dreadful vision and I myself are floating—she upon a fairy pinnace, and I upon an English three-decker. Both of us are wooing gales of festal happiness within the domain of our common country, within that ancient watery park, within that pathless chase of ocean, where England takes her pleasure as a huntress through winter and summer, from the rising to the setting sun. Ah, what a wilderness of floral beauty was hidden, or was suddenly revealed, upon the tropic islands through which the pinnace moved! And upon her deck what a bevy of human flowers—young women how lovely, young men how noble, that were dancing together, and slowly drifting towards *us* amidst music and incense, amidst blossoms from forests and gorgeous corymbi from vintages, amidst natural carolling, and the echoes of sweet girlish laughter. Slowly the pinnace nears us, gaily she hails us, and silently she disappears beneath the shadow of our mighty bows. But then, as at some signal from heaven, the music, and the carols, and the sweet echoing of girlish laughter—all are hushed. What evil has smitten the pinnace, meeting or overtaking her? Did ruin to our friends couch within our own dreadful shadow? Was our shadow the shadow of death? I looked over the bow for an answer, and, behold! the pinnace was dismantled; the revel and the revellers were found no more; the glory of the vintage was dust; and the forests with their beauty were left without a witness upon the seas. "But where," and I turned to our crew—"where are the lovely women that danced beneath the awning of flowers

and clustering corymbi? Whither have fled the noble young men that danced with *them?*" Answer there was none. But suddenly the man at the mast-head, whose countenance darkened with alarm, cried out, "Sail on the weather beam! Down she comes upon us: in seventy seconds she also will founder."

II

I looked to the weather side, and the summer had departed. The sea was rocking, and shaken with gathering wrath. Upon its surface sat mighty mists, which grouped themselves into arches and long cathedral aisles. Down one of these, with the fiery pace of a quarrel from a cross-bow, ran a frigate right athwart our course. "Are they mad?" some voice exclaimed from our deck. "Do they woo their ruin?" But in a moment, as she was close upon us, some impulse of a heady current or local vortex gave a wheeling bias to her course, and off she forged without a shock. As she ran past us, high aloft amongst the shrouds stood the lady of the pinnace. The deeps opened ahead in malice to receive her, towering surges of foam ran after her, the billows were fierce to catch her. But far away she was borne into desert spaces of the sea; whilst still by sight I followed her, as she ran before the howling gale, chased by angry sea-birds and by maddening billows; still I saw her, as at the moment when she ran past us, standing amongst the shrouds, with her white draperies streaming before the wind. There she stood, with hair dishevelled, one hand clutched amongst the tackling—rising, sinking, fluttering, trembling, praying—there for leagues I saw her as she stood, raising at intervals one hand to heaven, amidst the fiery crests of the pursuing waves and the raving of the storm; until at last, upon a sound from afar of malicious laughter and mockery, all was hidden for ever in driving showers; and afterwards, but when I know not, nor how.

III

Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn, awakened me as I slept in a boat moored to some familiar shore. The morning twilight even then was breaking; and, by the dusky revelations which it spread, I saw a girl, adorned with a garland of white roses about her head for some great festival, running along the solitary strand in extremity of haste. Her running was the running of panic; and often she looked back as to some dreadful

enemy in the rear. But when I leaped ashore, and followed on her steps to warn her of a peril in front, alas! from me she fled as from another peril, and vainly I shouted to her of quicksands that lay ahead. Faster and faster she ran; round a promontory of rocks she wheeled out of sight; in an instant I also wheeled round it, but only to see the treacherous sands gathering above her head. Already her person was buried; only the fair young head and the diadem of white roses around it were still visible to the pitying heavens; and, last of all, was visible, one white marble arm. I saw by the early twilight this fair young head, as it was sinking down to darkness—saw this marble arm, as it rose above her head and her treacherous grave, tossing, faltering, rising, clutching, as at some false deceiving hand stretched out from the clouds—saw this marble arm uttering her dying hope, and then uttering her dying despair. The head, the diadem, the arm—these all had sunk; at last over these also the cruel quicksand had closed; and no memorial of the fair young girl remained on earth, except my own solitary tears, and the funeral bells from the desert seas, that, rising again more softly, sang a requiem over the grave of the buried child, and over her blighted dawn.

I sat, and wept in secret the tears that men have ever given to the memory of those that died before the dawn, and by the treachery of earth, our mother. But suddenly the tears and funeral bells were hushed by a shout as of many nations, and by a roar from some great king's artillery, advancing rapidly along the valleys, and heard afar by echoes from the mountains. "Hush!" I said, as I bent my ear earthwards to listen—"hush!"—this either is the very anarchy of strife, or else"—and then I listened more profoundly, and whispered as I raised my head—"or else, oh heavens! it is *victory* that is final, victory that swallows up all strife."

IV

Immediately, in trance, I was carried over land and sea to some distant kingdom, and placed upon a triumphal car, amongst companions crowned with laurel. The darkness of gathering midnight, brooding over all the land, hid from us the mighty crowds that were weaving restlessly about ourselves as a centre: we heard them, but saw them not. Tidings had arrived, within an hour, of a grandeur that measured itself against centuries; too full of pathos they were, too full of joy, to utter themselves by other language than by tears, by restless anthems, and *Te*

Deums reverberated from the choirs and orchestras of earth. These tidings we that sat upon the laurelled car had it for our privilege to publish amongst all nations. And already, by signs audible through the darkness, by snortings and tramplings, our angry horses, that knew no fear of fleshly weariness, upbraided us with delay. Wherefore *was* it that we delayed? We waited for a secret word, that should bear witness to the hope of nations, as now accomplished for ever. At midnight the secret word arrived; which word was—Waterloo and Recovered Christendom! The dreadful word shone by its own light; before us it went; high above our leaders' heads it rode, and spread a golden light over the paths which we traversed. Every city, at the presence of the secret word, threw open its gates. The rivers were conscious as we crossed. All the forests, as we ran along their margins, shivered in homage to the secret word. And the darkness comprehended it.

Two hours after midnight we approached a mighty Minster. Its gates, which rose to the clouds, were closed. But when the dreadful word, that rode before us, reached them with its golden light, silently they moved back upon their hinges; and at a flying gallop our equipage entered the grand aisle of the cathedral. Headlong was our pace; and at every altar, in the little chapels and oratories to the right hand and left of our course, the lamps, dying or sickening, kindled anew in sympathy with the secret word that was flying past. Forty leagues we might have run in the cathedral, and as yet no strength of morning light had reached us, when before us we saw the aerial galleries of organ and choir. Every pinnacle of the fretwork, every station of advantage amongst the traceries, was crested by white-robed choristers, that sang deliverance; that wept no more tears, as once their fathers had wept; but at intervals that sang together to the generations, saying,

"Chant the deliverer's praise in very tongue,"

and receiving answers from afar,

"Such as once in heaven and earth were sung."

And of their chanting was no end; of our headlong pace was neither pause nor slackening.

Thus, as we ran like torrents—thus, as we swept with bridal rapture over the Campo Santo [1] of the cathedral graves—sud-

[1] "*Campo Santo:*"—It is probable that most of my readers will be acquainted with the history of the Campo Santo (or cemetery) at Pisa, composed of earth brought from Jerusalem from a bed of sanctity, as the highest prize which the noble piety of crusaders could ask or imagine. To

denly we became aware of a vast necropolis rising upon the far-off horizon—a city of sepulchres, built within the saintly cathedral for the warrior dead that rested from their feuds on earth. Of purple granite was the necropolis; yet, in the first minute, it lay like a purple stain upon the horizon, so mighty was the distance. In the second minute it trembled through many changes, growing into terraces and towers of wondrous altitude, so mighty was the pace. In the third minute already, with our dreadful gallop, we were entering its suburbs. Vast sarcophagi rose on every side, having towers and turrets that, upon the limits of the central aisle, strode forward with haughty intrusion, that ran back with mighty shadows into answering recesses. Every sarcophagus showed many bas-reliefs—bas-reliefs of battles and of battle-fields; battles from forgotten ages—battles from yesterday—battle-fields that, long since, nature had healed and reconciled to herself with the sweet oblivion of flowers—battle-fields that were yet angry and crimson with carnage. Where the terraces ran, there did *we* run; where the towers curved, there did *we* curve. With the flight of swallows our horses swept round every angle. Like rivers in flood, wheeling round headlands—like hurricanes that ride into the secrets of forests—faster than ever light unwove the mazes of darkness, our flying equipage carried earthly passions, kindled warrior instincts, amongst the dust that lay around us—dust oftentimes of our noble fathers that had slept in God from Créci to Trafalgar. And now had we reached the last sarcophagus, now were we abreast of the last bas-relief, already had we recovered the arrow-like flight of the illimitable central aisle, when coming up this aisle to meet us we beheld afar off a female child, that rode in a carriage as frail as flowers. The mists, which went before her, hid the fawns that drew her, but could not hide the shells and tropic flowers with which she played—but could not hide the lovely smiles by which she uttered her trust in the mighty cathedral, and in the cherubim that looked down upon her from the mighty shafts of its pillars. Face to face she was meeting us; face to face she rode, as if danger there were none. "Oh, baby!" I exclaimed, "shalt

readers who are unacquainted with England, or who (being English) are yet unacquainted with the cathedral cities of England, it may be right to mention that the graves within-side the cathedrals often form a flat pavement over which carriages and horses *might* run; and perhaps a boyish remembrance of one particular cathedral, across which I had seen passengers walk and burdens carried, as about two centuries back they were through the middle of St. Paul's in London, may have assisted my dream.

thou be the ransom for Waterloo? Must we, that carry tidings of great joy to every people, be messengers of ruin to thee!" In horror I rose at the thought; but then also, in horror at the thought, rose one that was sculptured on a bas-relief—a Dying Trumpeter. Solemnly from the field of battle he rose to his feet; and, unslinging his stony trumpet, carried it, in his dying anguish, to his stony lips—sounding once, and yet once again; proclamation that, in *thy* ears, oh baby! spoke from the battlements of death. Immediately deep shadows fell between us, and aboriginal silence. The choir had ceased to sing. The hoofs of our horses, the dreadful rattle of our harness, the groaning of our wheels, alarmed the graves no more. By horror the bas-relief had been unlocked unto life. By horror we, that were so full of life, we men and our horses, with their fiery fore-legs rising in mid air to their everlasting gallop, were frozen to a bas-relief. Then a third time the trumpet sounded; the seals were taken off all pulses; life, and the frenzy of life, tore into their channels again; again the choir burst forth in sunny grandeur, as from the muffling of storms and darkness; again the thunderings of our horses carried temptation into the graves. One cry burst from our lips, as the clouds, drawing off from the aisle, showed it empty before us—"Whither has the infant fled?—is the young child caught up to God?" Lo! afar off, in a vast recess, rose three mighty windows to the clouds; and on a level with their summits, at height insuperable to man, rose an altar of purest alabaster. On its eastern face was trembling a crimson glory. A glory was it from the reddening dawn that now streamed *through* the windows? Was it from the crimson robes of the martyrs painted *on* the windows? Was it from the bloody bas-reliefs of earth? There, suddenly, within that crimson radiance, rose the apparition of a woman's head, and then of a woman's figure. The child it was—grown up to woman's height. Clinging to the horns of the altar, voiceless she stood—sinking, rising, raving, despairing; and behind the volume of incense, that, night and day, streamed upwards from the altar, dimly was seen the fiery font, and the shadow of that dreadful being who should have baptized her with the baptism of death. But by her side was kneeling her better angel, that hid his face with wings; that wept and pleaded for *her;* that prayed when *she* could *not;* that fought with Heaven by tears for *her* deliverance; which also, as he raised his immortal countenance from his wings, I saw, by the glory in his eye, that from Heaven he had won at last.

V

Then was completed the passion of the mighty fugue. The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet had but muttered at intervals—gleaming amongst clouds and surges in incense—threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter!—with thy love that was victorious, and thy anguish that was finishing—didst enter the tumult; trumpet and echo—farewell love, and farewell anguish—rang through the dreadful *sanctus*. Oh, darkness of the grave! that from the crimson altar and from the fiery font wert visited and searched by the effulgence in the angel's eye—were these indeed thy children? Pomps of life, that, from the burials of centuries, rose again to the voice of perfect joy, did ye indeed mingle with the festivals of Death? Lo! as I looked back for seventy leagues through the mighty cathedral, I saw the quick and the dead that sang together to God, together that sang to the generations of man. All the hosts of jubilation, like armies that ride in pursuit, moved with one step. Us, that, with laurelled heads, were passing from the cathedral, they overtook, and, as with a garment, they wrapped us round with thunders greater than our own. As brothers we moved together; to the dawn that advanced—to the stars that fled; rendering thanks to God in the highest—that, having hid His face through one generation behind thick clouds of War, once again was ascending—from the Campo Santo of Waterloo was ascending—in the visions of Peace; rendering thanks for thee, young girl! whom, having overshadowed with His ineffable passion of death, suddenly did God relent; suffered thy angel to turn aside His arm; and even in thee, sister unknown! shown to me for a moment only to be hidden for ever, found an occasion to glorify His goodness. A thousand times, amongst the phantoms of sleep, have I seen thee entering the gates of the golden dawn—with the secret word riding before thee—with the armies of the grave behind thee; seen thee sinking, rising, raving, despairing; a thousand times in the worlds of sleep have seen thee followed by God's angel through storms; through desert seas; through the darkness of quicksands! through dreams, and the dreadful revelations that are in dreams—only that at the last, with one sling of His victorious arm, He might snatch thee back from ruin, and might emblazon in thy deliverance the endless resurrections of His love!

ON MURDER

CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE FINE ARTS

ADVERTISEMENT OF A MAN MORBIDLY VIRTUOUS

Most of us, who read books, have probably heard of a Society for the Promotion of Vice, of the Hell-Fire Club, founded in the last century by Sir Francis Dashwood, etc. At Brighton I think it was, that a Society was formed for the Suppression of Virtue. That society was itself suppressed; but I am sorry to say that another exists in London, of a character still more atrocious. In tendency, it may be denominated a Society for the Encouragement of Murder; but, according to their own delicate εὐφημισμὸς, it is styled, The Society of Connoisseurs in Murder. They profess to be curious in homicide; amateurs and dilettanti in the various modes of carnage; and, in short, Murder-Fanciers. Every fresh atrocity of that class which the police annals of Europe bring up, they meet and criticise as they would a picture, statue, or other work of art. But I need not trouble myself with any attempt to describe the spirit of their proceedings, as the reader will collect *that* much better from one of the monthly lectures read before the society last year. This has fallen into my hands accidentally, in spite of all the vigilance exercised to keep their transactions from the public eye. The publication of it will alarm them; and my purpose is, that it should. For I would much rather put them down quietly, by an appeal to public opinion, than by such an exposure of names as would follow an appeal to Bow Street; which last appeal, however, if this should fail, I must really resort to. For my intense virtue will not put up with such things in a Christian land. Even in a heathen land, the toleration of murder—viz., in the dreadful shows of the amphitheatre—was felt by a Christian writer to be the most crying reproach of the public morals. This writer was Lactantius; and with his words, as singularly applicable to the present occasion, I shall conclude:—"Quid tam horribile," says he, "tam tetrum, quam hominis trucidatio? Ideo severissimis legibus vita nostra munitur; ideo

bella execrabilia sunt. Invenit tamen consuetudo quatenus homicidium sine bello ac sine legibus faciat: et hoc sibi voluptas quod scelus vindicavit. Quod si interesse homicidio sceleris conscientia est—et eidem facinori spectator obstrictus est cui et admissor; ergo et in his gladiatorum cædibus non minus cruore profunditur qui spectat, quam ille qui facit: nec potest esse immunis à sanguine qui voluit effundi; aut videri non interfecisse, qui interfectori et favit et præmium postulavit." "What is so dreadful," says Lactantius, "what so dismal and revolting, as the murder of a human creature? Therefore it is, that life for us is protected by laws the most rigorous: therefore it is, that wars are objects of execration. And yet the traditional usage of Rome has devised a mode of authorising murder apart from war, and in defiance of law; and the demands of taste (voluptas) are now become the same as those of abandoned guilt." Let the Society of Gentlemen Amateurs consider this; and let me call their especial attention to the last sentence, which is so weighty that I shall attempt to convey it in English: "Now, if merely to be present at a murder fastens on a man the character of an accomplice; if barely to be a spectator involves us in one common guilt with the perpetrator, it follows, of necessity, that, in these murders of the amphitheatre, the hand which inflicts the fatal blow is not more deeply imbrued in blood than his who passively looks on; neither can *he* be clear of blood who has countenanced its shedding; nor that man seem other than a participator in murder, who gives his applause to the murderer, and calls for prizes on his behalf." The "*præmia postulavit*" I have not yet heard charged upon the Gentlemen Amateurs of London, though undoubtedly their proceedings tend to that; but the "*interfectori favit*" is implied in the very title of this association, and expressed in every line of the lecture which follows. X. Y. Z.

LECTURE

GENTLEMEN,—I have had the honour to be appointed by your committee to the trying task of reading the Williams' Lecture on Murder, considered as one of the Fine Arts; a task which might be easy enough three or four centuries ago, when the art was little understood, and few great models had been exhibited; but in this age, when masterpieces of excellence

have been executed by professional men, it must be evident, that in the style of criticism applied to them, the public will look for something of a corresponding improvement. Practice and theory must advance *pari passu*. People begin to see that something more goes to the composition of a fine murder than two blockheads to kill and be killed—a knife—a purse—and a dark lane. Design, gentlemen, grouping, light and shade, poetry, sentiment, are now deemed indispensable to attempts of this nature. Mr. Williams has exalted the ideal of murder to all of us; and to me, therefore, in particular, has deepened the arduousness of my task. Like Æschylus or Milton in poetry, like Michael Angelo in painting, he has carried his art to a point of colossal sublimity; and, as Mr. Wordsworth observes, has in a manner "created the taste by which he is to be enjoyed." To sketch the history of the art, and to examine its principles critically, now remains as a duty for the connoisseur, and for judges of quite another stamp from his Majesty's Judges of Assize.

Before I begin, let me say a word or two to certain prigs, who affect to speak of our society as if it were in some degree immoral in its tendency. Immoral! Jupiter protect me, gentlemen, what is it that people mean? I am for morality, and always shall be, and for virtue, and all that; and I do affirm, and always shall (let what will come of it), that murder is an improper line of conduct, highly improper; and I do not stick to assert, that any man who deals in murder must have very incorrect ways of thinking, and truly inaccurate principles; and so far from aiding and abetting him by pointing out his victim's hiding-place, as a great moralist [1] of Germany declared it to be every good man's duty to do, I would subscribe one shilling and sixpence to have him apprehended, which is more by eighteenpence than the most eminent moralists have hitherto subscribed for that purpose. But what then? Everything in this world has two handles. Murder, for instance, may be laid hold of by its moral handle (as it generally is in the pulpit, and at the Old Bailey); and *that*, I confess, is its weak side; or it

[1] Kant—who carried his demands of unconditional veracity to so extravagant a length as to affirm that, if a man were to see an innocent person escape from a murderer, it would be his duty, on being questioned by the murderer, to tell the truth, and to point out the retreat of the innocent person, under any certainty of causing murder. Lest this doctrine should be supposed to have escaped him in any heat of dispute, on being taxed with it by a celebrated French writer, he solemnly re-affirmed it, with his reasons.

may also be treated *æsthetically*, as the Germans call it—that is, in relation to good taste.

To illustrate this, I will urge the authority of three eminent persons; viz., S. T. Coleridge, Aristotle, and Mr. Howship the surgeon. To begin with S. T. C. One night, many years ago, I was drinking tea with him in Berners Street (which, by the way, for a short street, has been uncommonly fruitful in men of genius). Others were there besides myself; and, amidst some carnal considerations of tea and toast, we were all imbibing a dissertation on Plotinus from the Attic lips of S. T. C. Suddenly a cry arose of "*Fire—fire!*" upon which all of us, master and disciples, Plato and οἱ περὶ τον Πλάωνα, rushed out, eager for the spectacle. The fire was in Oxford Street, at a pianoforte-maker's; and, as it promised to be a conflagration of merit, I was sorry that my engagements forced me away from Mr. Coleridge's party, before matters had come to a crisis. Some days after, meeting with my Platonic host, I reminded him of the case, and begged to know how that very promising exhibition had terminated. "Oh, sir," said he, "it turned out so ill that we damned it unanimously." Now, does any man suppose that Mr. Coleridge—who, for all he is too fat to be a person of active virtue, is undoubtedly a worthy Christian—that this good S. T. C., I say, was an incendiary, or capable of wishing any ill to the poor man and his pianofortes (many of them, doubtless, with the additional keys)? On the contrary, I know him to be that sort of man, that I durst stake my life upon it, he would have worked an engine in a case of necessity, although rather of the fattest for such fiery trials of his virtue. But how stood the case? Virtue was in no request. On the arrival of the fire engines, morality had devolved wholly on the insurance office. This being the case, he had a right to gratify his taste. He had left his tea. Was he to have nothing in return?

I contend that the most virtuous man, under the premises stated, was entitled to make a luxury of the fire, and to hiss it, as he would any other performance that raised expectations in the public mind which afterwards it disappointed. Again, to cite another great authority, what says the Stagirite? He (in the Fifth Book, I think it is, of his *Metaphysics*) describes what he calls κλεπτὴν τέλειον—*i.e., a perfect thief;* and, as to Mr. Howship, in a work of his on Indigestion, he makes no scruple to talk with admiration of a certain ulcer which he had seen, and which he styles "a beautiful ulcer." Now, will any man

pretend, that, abstractedly considered, a thief could appear to Aristotle a perfect character, or that Mr. Howship could be enamoured of an ulcer? Aristotle, it is well known, was himself so very moral a character, that, not content with writing his *Nichomachéan Ethics*, in one volume octavo, he also wrote another system, called *Magna Moralia*, or Big Ethics. Now, it is impossible that a man who composes any ethics at all, big or little, should admire a thief *per se;* and as to Mr. Howship, it is well known that he makes war upon all ulcers, and, without suffering himself to be seduced by their charms, endeavours to banish them from the county of Middlesex. But the truth is, that, however objectionable *per se*, yet, relatively to others of their class, both a thief and an ulcer may have infinite degrees of merit. They are both imperfections, it is true; but, to be imperfect being their essence, the very greatness of their imperfection becomes their perfection. *Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna.* A thief like Autolycus or the once famous George Barrington, and a grim phagedænic ulcer, superbly defined, and running regularly through all its natural stages, may no less justly be regarded as ideals after *their* kind, than the most faultless moss-rose amongst flowers, in its progress from bud to "bright consummate flower;" or, amongst human flowers, the most magnificent young female, apparelled in the pomp of womanhood. And thus not only the ideal of an inkstand may be imagined (as Mr. Coleridge illustrated in his celebrated correspondence with Mr. Blackwood), in which, by the way, there is not so much, because an inkstand is a laudable sort of thing, and a valuable member of society; but even imperfection itself may have its ideal or perfect state.

Really, gentlemen, I beg pardon for so much philosophy at one time; and now let me apply it. When a murder is in the paulo-post-futurum tense—not done, not even (according to modern purism) *being* done, but only going to be done—and a rumour of it comes to our ears, by all means let us treat it morally. But suppose it over and done, and that you can say of it, Τετέλεσται, It is finished, or (in that adamantine molossus of Medea) εἴργασται, Done it is: it is a *fait accompli;* suppose the poor murdered man to be out of his pain, and the rascal that did it off like a shot, nobody knows whither; suppose, lastly, that we have done our best, by putting out our legs, to trip up the fellow in his flight, but all to no purpose—"abiit, evasit, excessit, erupit," etc.—why, then, I say, what's the use of any more virtue? Enough has been given to morality; now comes

the turn of Taste and the Fine Arts. A sad thing it was, no doubt, very sad; but *we* can't mend it. Therefore let us make the best of a bad matter; and, as it is impossible to hammer anything out of it for moral purposes, let us treat it æsthetically, and see if it will turn to account in that way. Such is the logic of a sensible man, and what follows? We dry up our tears, and have the satisfaction, perhaps, to discover that a transaction, which, morally considered, was shocking, and without a leg to stand upon, when tried by principles of Taste, turns out to be a very meritorious performance. Thus all the world is pleased; the old proverb is justified, that it is an ill wind which blows nobody good; the amateur, from looking bilious and sulky, by too close an attention to virtue, begins to pick up his crumbs; and general hilarity prevails. Virtue has had her day; and henceforward, *Virtù*, so nearly the same thing as to differ only by a single letter (which surely is not worth haggling or higgling about)—*Virtù*, I repeat, and Connoisseurship, have leave to provide for themselves. Upon this principle, gentlemen, I propose to guide your studies, from Cain to Mr. Thurtell. Through this great gallery of murder, therefore, together let us wander hand in hand, in delighted admiration, while I endeavour to point your attention to the objects of profitable criticism.

The first murder is familiar to you all. As the inventor of murder, and the father of the art, Cain must have been a man of first-rate genius. All the Cains were men of genius. Tubal Cain invented tubes, I think, or some such thing. But, whatever might be the originality and genius of the artist, every art was then in its infancy, and the works turned out from each several *studio*, must be criticised with a recollection of that fact. Even Tubal's work would probably be little approved at this day in Sheffield; and therefore of Cain (Cain senior, I mean) it is no disparagement to say, that his performance was but so-so. Milton, however, is supposed to have thought differently. By his way of relating the case, it should seem to have been rather a pet murder with him, for he retouches it with an apparent anxiety for its picturesque effect:—

> "Whereat he inly raged; and, as they talk'd,
> Smote him into the midriff with a stone
> That beat out life: he fell; and, deadly pale,
> Groan'd out his soul *with gushing blood effused*."
>
> *Par. Lost*, B. xi.

Upon this, Richardson the painter, who had an eye for effect,

remarks as follows, in his *Notes on Paradise Lost*, p. 497:—"It has been thought," says he, "that Cain beat (as the common saying is) the breath out of his brother's body with a great stone; Milton gives in to this, with the addition, however, of a large wound." In this place it was a judicious addition; for the rudeness of the weapon, unless raised and enriched by a warm, sanguinary colouring, has too much of the naked air of the savage school; as if the deed were perpetrated by a Polypheme without science, premeditation, or anything but a mutton bone. However, I am chiefly pleased with the improvement, as it implies that Milton was an amateur. As to Shakspeare, there never was a better; witness his description of the murdered Duncan, Banquo, etc.; and above all, witness his incomparable miniature, in *Henry VI.*, of the murdered Gloucester.[1]

The foundation of the art having been once laid, it is pitiable to see how it slumbered without improvement for ages. In fact, I shall now be obliged to leap over all murders, sacred and profane, as utterly unworthy of notice, until long after the Christian era. Greece, even in the age of Pericles, produced no murder, or at least none is recorded, of the slightest merit;

[1] The passage occurs in the *second* part (act 3) of *Henry VI.*, and is doubly remarkable—first, for its critical fidelity to nature, were the description meant only for *poetic* effect; but secondly, for the *judicial* value impressed upon it when offered (as here it *is* offered) in silent corroboration legally of a dreadful whisper, all at once arising, that foul play had been dealing with a great prince, clothed with an official state character. It is the Duke of Gloucester, faithful guardian and loving uncle of the simple and imbecile king, who has been found dead in his bed. How shall this event be interpreted? Had he died under some natural visitation of Providence, or by violence from his enemies? The two court factions read the circumstantial indications of the case into opposite constructions. The affectionate and afflicted young king, whose position almost pledges him to neutrality, cannot, nevertheless, disguise his overwhelming suspicions of hellish conspiracy in the background. Upon this, a leader of the opposite faction endeavours to break the force of this royal frankness, countersigned and echoed most impressively by Lord Warwick. "What *instance*," he asks—meaning by *instance* not example or illustration, as thoughtless commentators have constantly supposed, but in the common scholastic sense—what *instantia*, what pressure of argument, what urgent plea, can Lord Warwick put forward in support of his "dreadful oath"—an oath, namely, that as surely as he hopes for the life eternal, so surely

> "I do believe that violent hands were laid
> Upon the life of this thrice faméd duke."

Ostensibly the challenge is to Warwick, but substantially it is meant for the king. And the reply of Warwick, the argument on which he builds, lies in a solemn array of all the changes worked in the duke's features by death, as irreconcilable with any other hypothesis than that this death had been a violent one. What argument have I that Gloucester died under the hands of murderers? Why the following roll-call of awful changes, affecting head, face, nostrils, eyes, hands, etc., which do not

and Rome had too little originality of genius in any of the arts to succeed where her model failed her.[1] In fact, the Latin language sinks under the very idea of murder. "The man was murdered;"—how will this sound in Latin? *Interfectus est, interemptus est*—which simply expresses a homicide; and hence the Christian Latinity of the middle ages was obliged to introduce a new word, such as the feebleness of classic conceptions never ascended to. *Murdratus est*, says the sublimer dialect of Gothic ages. Meantime, the Jewish school of murder kept alive whatever was yet known in the art, and gradually transferred it to the Western World. Indeed, the Jewish school was always respectable even in its medieval stages, as the case of Hugh of Lincoln shows, which was honoured with the approbation of Chaucer, on occasion of another performance from the same school, which, in his *Canterbury Tales*, he puts into the mouth of the Lady Abbess.

Recurring, however, for one moment, to classical antiquity,

belong indifferently to *any* mode of death, but exclusively to a death by violence:

> "But see, his face is black and full of blood;
> His eyeballs farther out than when he lived,
> Staring full ghastly, like a strangled man,
> His hair uprear'd, his nostrils stretch'd with struggling;
> His hands abroad display'd, as one that grasp'd
> And tugg'd for life, and was by strength subdued.
> Look on the sheets:—his hair, you see, is sticking;
> His well-proportion'd beard made rough and rugged,
> Like to the summer's corn by tempest lodged.
> It cannot be but he was murder'd here;
> To least of all these signs were probable."

As the logic of the case, let us not for a moment forget that, to be of any value, the signs and indications pleaded must be sternly *diagnostic*. The discrimination sought for is between death that is natural and death that is violent. All indications, therefore, that belong equally and indifferently to either, are equivocal, useless, and alien from the very purpose of the signs here registered by Shakspeare.

[1] At the time of writing this, I held the common opinion upon that subject. Mere inconsideration it was that led to so erroneous a judgment. Since then, on closer reflection, I have seen ample reason to retract it: satisfied I now am, that the Romans, in every art which allowed to them any parity of advantages, had merits as racy, native, and characteristic, as the best of the Greeks. Elsewhere I shall plead this cause circumstantially, with the hope of converting the reader. In the meantime, I was anxious to lodge my protest against this ancient error; an error which commenced in the time-serving sycophancy of Virgil the court-poet. With the base purpose of gratifying Augustus in his vindictive spite against Cicero, and by way of introducing, therefore, the little clause, *orabunt Causas melius* as applying to all Athenian against all Roman orators, Virgil did not scruple to sacrifice by wholesale the just pretensions of his compatriots collectively.

I cannot but think that Catiline, Clodius, and some of that coterie, would have made first-rate artists; and it is on all accounts to be regretted, that the priggism of Cicero robbed his country of the only chance she had for distinction in this line. As the *subject* of a murder, no person could have answered better than himself. Oh Gemini! how he would have howled with panic, if he had heard Cethegus under his bed. It would have been truly diverting to have listened to him; and satisfied I am, gentlemen, that he would have preferred the *utile* of creeping into a closet, or even into a *cloaca*, to the *honestum* of facing the bold artist.

To come now to the dark ages—(by which we that speak with precision mean, *par excellence*, the tenth century as a meridian line, and the two centuries immediately before and after, full midnight being from A.D. 888 to A.D. 1111)—these ages ought naturally to be favourable to the art of murder, as they were to church architecture, to stained glass, etc.; and, accordingly, about the latter end of this period, there arose a great character in our art, I mean the Old Man of the Mountains. He was a shining light, indeed, and I need not tell you that the very word "assassin" is deduced from him. So keen an amateur was he, that on one occasion, when his own life was attempted by a favourite assassin, he was so much pleased with the talent shown, that, notwithstanding the failure of the artist, he created him a duke upon the spot, with remainder to the female line, and settled a pension on him for three lives. Assassination is a branch of the art which demands a separate notice; and it is possible that I may devote an entire lecture to it. Meantime, I shall only observe how odd it is, that this branch of the art has flourished by intermitting fits. It never rains, but it pours. Our own age can boast of some fine specimens, such, for instance, as Bellingham's affair with the prime minister Percival, the Duc de Berri's case at the Parisian Opera House, the Maréchal Bessieres' case at Avignon; and about two and a half centuries ago there was a most brilliant constellation of murders in this class. I need hardly say, that I allude especially to those seven splendid works—the assassinations of William I., of Orange; of the three French Henries, viz.—Henri, Duke of Guise, that had a fancy for the throne of France; of Henri III., last prince in the line of Valois, who then occupied that throne; and finally of Henri IV., his brother-in-law, who succeeded to that throne as first prince in the line of Bourbon; not eighteen years later came the fifth on the roll, viz., that of our Duke of

Buckingham (which you will find excellently described in the letters published by Sir Henry Ellis, of the British Museum), sixthly of Gustavus Adolphus, and seventhly of Wallenstein. What a glorious Pleiad of murders! And it increases one's admiration—that this bright constellation of artistic displays, comprehending three majesties, three serene highnesses, and one excellency, all lay within so narrow a field of time as between A.D. 1588 and 1635. The King of Sweden's assassination, by the bye, is doubted by many writers, Harte amongst others; but they are wrong. He was murdered; and I consider his murder unique in its excellence; for he was murdered at noon-day, and on the field of battle—a feature of original conception, which occurs in no other work of art that I remember. To conceive the idea of a secret murder on private account, as enclosed within a little parenthesis on a vast stage of public battle-carnage, is like Hamlet's subtle device of a tragedy within a tragedy. Indeed, all of these assassinations may be studied with profit by the advanced connoisseur. They are all of them *exemplaria* model murders, pattern murders, of which one may say—

"Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ;"

especially *nocturnâ*.

In these assassinations of princes and statesmen, there is nothing to excite our wonder; important changes often depend on their deaths; and, from the eminence on which they stand, they are peculiarly exposed to the aim of every artist who happens to be possessed by the craving for scenical effect. But there is another class of assassinations, which has prevailed from an early period of the seventeenth century, that really *does* surprise me; I mean the assassination of philosophers. For, gentlemen, it is a fact, that every philosopher of eminence for the two last centuries has either been murdered, or, at the least, been very near it; insomuch, that if a man calls himself a philosopher, and never had his life attempted, rest assured there is nothing in him; and against Locke's philosophy in particular, I think it an unanswerable objection (if we needed any), that, although he carried his throat about with him in this world for seventy-two years, no man ever condescended to cut it. As these cases of philosophers are not much known, and are generally good and well composed in their circumstances, I shall here read an excursus on that subject, chiefly by way of showing my own learning.

The first great philosopher of the seventeenth century (if

we except Bacon and Galileo) was Des Cartes; and if ever one could say of a man that he was all *but* murdered—murdered within an inch—one must say it of him. The case was this, as reported by Baillet in his *Vie De M. Des Cartes*, tom. I. p. 102-3. In the year 1621, when Des Cartes might be about twenty-six years old, he was touring about as usual (for he was as restless as a hyena); and, coming to the Elbe, either at Gluckstadt or at Hamburgh, he took shipping for East Friezland. What he could want in East Friezland no man has ever discovered; and perhaps he took this into consideration himself; for, on reaching Embden, he resolved to sail instantly for *West* Friezland; and being very impatient of delay, he hired a bark, with a few mariners to navigate it. No sooner had he got out to sea, than he made a pleasing discovery, viz., that he had shut himself up in a den of murderers. His crew, says M. Baillet, he soon found out to be " des scélérats "—not *amateurs*, gentlemen, as we are, but professional men—the height of whose ambition at that moment was to cut his individual throat. But the story is too pleasing to be abridged; I shall give it, therefore, accurately, from the French of his biographer: " M. Des Cartes had no company but that of his servant, with whom he was conversing in French. The sailors, who took him for a foreign merchant, rather than a cavalier, concluded that he must have money about him. Accordingly, they came to a resolution by no means advantageous to his purse. There is this difference, however, between sea-robbers and the robbers in forests, that the latter may, without hazard, spare the lives of their victims; whereas the others cannot put a passenger on shore in such a case without running the risk of being apprehended. The crew of M. Des Cartes arranged their measures with a view to evade any danger of that sort. They observed that he was a stranger from a distance, without acquaintance in the country, and that nobody would take any trouble to inquire about him, in case he should never come to hand (*quand il viendroit à manquer*)." Think, gentlemen, of these Friezland dogs discussing a philosopher as if he were a puncheon of rum consigned to some shipbroker. " His temper, they remarked, was very mild and patient; and, judging from the gentleness of his deportment, and the courtesy with which he treated themselves, that he could be nothing more than some green young man, without station or root in the world, they concluded that they should have all the easier task in disposing of his life. They made no scruple to discuss the whole matter in his presence, as not

supposing that he understood any other language than that in which he conversed with his servant; and the amount of their deliberation was—to murder him, then to throw him into the sea, and to divide his spoils."

Excuse my laughing, gentlemen; but the fact is, I always *do* laugh when I think of this case—two things about it seem so droll. One is, the horrid panic or "funk" (as the men of Eton call it) in which Des Cartes must have found himself, upon hearing this regular drama sketched for his own death—funeral —succession and administration to his effects. But another thing which seems to me still more funny about this affair is, that if these Friezland hounds had been "game," we should have no Cartesian philosophy; and how we could have done without *that*, considering the world of books it has produced, I leave to any respectable trunk-maker to declare.

However, to go on: spite of his enormous funk, Des Cartes showed fight, and by that means awed these Anti-Cartesian rascals. "Finding," says M. Baillet, "that the matter was no joke, M. Des Cartes leaped upon his feet in a trice, assumed a stern countenance that these cravens had never looked for, and, addressing them in their own language, threatened to run them through on the spot if they dared to give him any insult." Certainly, gentlemen, this would have been an honour far above the merits of such inconsiderable rascals—to be spitted like larks upon a Cartesian sword; and therefore I am glad M. Des Cartes did not rob the gallows by executing his threat, especially as he could not possibly have brought his vessel to port, after he had murdered his crew; so that he must have continued to cruise for ever in the Zuyder Zee, and would probably have been mistaken by sailors for the *Flying Dutchman*, homeward bound. "The spirit which M. Des Cartes manifested," says his biographer, "had the effect of magic on these wretches. The suddenness of their consternation struck their minds with a confusion which blinded them to their advantage, and they conveyed him to his destination as peaceably as he could desire."

Possibly, gentlemen, you may fancy that, on the model of Cæsar's address to his poor ferryman—"*Cæsarem vehis et fortunas ejus*"—M. Des Cartes needed only to have said, "Dogs, you cannot cut my throat, for you carry Des Cartes and his philosophy," and might safely have defied them to do their worst. A German emperor had the same notion, when, being cautioned to keep out of the way of a cannonading, he replied, "Tut! man. Did you ever hear of a cannon-ball that killed

an emperor?"[1] As to an emperor I cannot say, but a less thing has sufficed to smash a philosopher; and the next great philosopher of Europe undoubtedly *was* murdered. This was Spinosa.

I know very well the common opinion about him is, that he died in his bed. Perhaps he did, but he was murdered for all that; and this I shall prove by a book published at Brussels in the year 1731, entitled *La Vie de Spinosa, par M. Jean Colerus*, with many additions, from a MS. life, by one of his friends. Spinosa died on the 21st February 1677, being then little more than forty-four years old. This, of itself, looks suspicious; and M. Jean admits, that a certain expression in the MS. life of him would warrant the conclusion, "que sa mort n'a pas été tout-à-fait naturelle." Living in a damp country, and a sailor's country, like Holland, he may be thought to have indulged a good deal in grog, especially in punch,[2] which was then newly discovered. Undoubtedly he might have done so; but the fact is that he did not. M. Jean calls him "extrêmement sobre en son boire et en son manger." And though some wild stories were afloat about his using the juice of mandragora (p. 140) and opium (p. 144), yet neither of these articles is found in his druggist's bill. Living, therefore, with such sobriety, how was it possible that he should die a natural death at forty-four? Hear his biographer's account:—"Sunday morning, the 21st of February, before it was church time, Spinosa came downstairs, and conversed with the master and mistress of the house." At this time, therefore, perhaps ten o'clock on Sunday morning, you see that Spinosa was alive, and pretty well. But it seems "he had summoned from Amsterdam a certain physician, whom," says the biographer, "I shall not otherwise point out to notice than by these two letters, L. M." This L. M. had directed the people of the house to purchase "an ancient cock,"

[1] This same argument has been employed at least once too often: some centuries back a dauphin of France, when admonished of his risk from small-pox, made the same demand as the emperor—"Had any gentleman heard of a dauphin killed by small-pox?" No; not any gentleman *had* heard of such a case. And yet, for all that, this dauphin died of that same small-pox.

[2] "June 1, 1675.—Drinke part of three boules of punch (a liquor very strainge to me)," says the Rev. Mr. Henry Teonge, in his *Diary* published by C. Knight. In a note on this passage, a reference is made to Fryer's *Travels to the East Indies*, 1672, who speaks of "that enervating liquor called *paunch* (which is Hindostanee for five), from five ingredients." Made thus, it seems the medical men called it diapente; if with four only, diatessaron. No doubt it was this evangelical name that recommended it to the Rev. Mr. Teonge.

and to have him boiled forthwith, in order that Spinosa might take some broth about noon; which in fact he did; and ate some of the *old cock* with a good appetite, after the landlord and his wife had returned from church.

"In the afternoon, L. M. staid alone with Spinosa, the people of the house having returned to church; on coming out from which, they learned, with much surprise, that Spinosa had died about three o'clock, in the presence of L. M., who took his departure for Amsterdam that same evening, by the night-boat, without paying the least attention to the deceased," and probably without paying very much attention to the payment of his own little account. "No doubt he was the readier to dispense with these duties, as he had possessed himself of a ducatoon, and a small quantity of silver, together with a silver-hafted knife, and had absconded with his pillage." Here you see, gentlemen, the murder is plain, and the manner of it. It was L. M. who murdered Spinosa for his money. Poor Spinosa was an invalid, meagre and weak: as no blood was observed, L. M. no doubt threw him down, and smothered him with pillows —the poor man being already half suffocated by his infernal dinner. After masticating that "ancient cock," which I take to mean a cock of the preceding century, in what condition could the poor invalid find himself for a stand-up fight with L. M.? But who was L. M.? It surely never could be Lindley Murray, for I saw him at York in 1825; and, besides, I do not think he would do such a thing—at least, not to a brother grammarian: for you know, gentlemen, that Spinosa wrote a very respectable Hebrew grammar.

Hobbes—but why, or on what principle, I never could understand—was not murdered. This was a capital oversight of the professional men in the seventeenth century; because in every light he was a fine subject for murder, except, indeed, that he was lean and skinny; for I can prove that he had money, and (what is very funny) he had no right to make the least resistance; since, according to himself, irresistible power creates the very highest species of right, so that it is rebellion of the blackest dye to refuse to be murdered, when a competent force appears to murder you. However, gentlemen, though he was not murdered, I am happy to assure you that (by his own account) he was three times very near being murdered, which is consolatory. The first time was in the spring of 1640, when he pretends to have circulated a little MS. on the king's behalf against the Parliament; he never could produce this MS., by

the bye; but he says, that, "Had not His Majesty dissolved the Parliament" (in May), "it had brought him into danger of his life." Dissolving the Parliament, however, was of no use; for in November of the same year the Long Parliament assembled, and Hobbes, a second time fearing he should be murdered, ran away to France. This looks like the madness of John Dennis, who thought that Louis XIV. would never make peace with Queen Anne, unless he (Dennis to wit) were given up to French vengeance; and actually ran away from the sea-coast under that belief. In France, Hobbes managed to take care of his throat pretty well for ten years; but at the end of that time, by way of paying court to Cromwell, he published his *Leviathan*. The old coward now began to "funk" horribly for the third time; he fancied the swords of the cavaliers were constantly at his throat, recollecting how they had served the Parliament ambassadors at the Hague and Madrid. "Tum," says he, in his dog-Latin life of himself,

> "Tum venit in mentem mihi Dorislaus et Ascham;
> Tanquam proscripto terror ubique aderat."

And accordingly he ran home to England. Now, certainly, it is very true that a man deserved a cudgelling for writing *Leviathan;* and two or three cudgellings for writing a pentameter ending so villainously as "terror ubique aderat!" But no man ever thought him worthy of anything beyond cudgelling. And, in fact, the whole story is a bounce of his own. For, in a most abusive letter which he wrote "to a learned person" (meaning Wallis the mathematician), he gives quite another account of the matter, and says (p. 8), he ran home "because he would not trust his safety with the French clergy;" insinuating that he was likely to be murdered for his religion, which would have been a high joke indeed—Tom's being brought to the stake for religion.

Bounce or not bounce, however, certain it is that Hobbes, to the end of his life, feared that somebody would murder him. This is proved by the story I am going to tell you: it is not from a manuscript, but (as Mr. Coleridge says) it is as good as manuscript, for it comes from a book now entirely forgotten, viz., *The Creed of Mr. Hobbes Examined: in a Conference between him and a Student in Divinity* (published about ten years before Hobbes's death). The book is anonymous, but it was written by Tennison, the same who, about thirty years after, succeeded Tillotson as Archbishop of Canterbury. The

introductory anecdote is as follows:—"A certain *divine*" (no doubt Tennison himself) "took an annual tour of one month to different parts of the island." In one of these excursions (1670), he visited the Peak in Derbyshire, partly in consequence of Hobbes's description of it. Being in that neighbourhood, he could not but pay a visit to Buxton; and at the very moment of his arrival, he was fortunate enough to find a party of gentlemen dismounting at the inn-door, amongst whom was a long thin fellow, who turned out to be no less a person than Mr. Hobbes, who probably had ridden over from Chatsworth.[1] Meeting so great a lion, a tourist, in search of the picturesque, could do no less than present himself in the character of bore. And luckily for this scheme, two of Mr. Hobbes's companions were suddenly summoned away by express; so that, for the rest of his stay at Buxton, he had Leviathan entirely to himself, and had the honour of bowsing with him in the evening. Hobbes, it seems, at first showed a good deal of stiffness, for he was shy of divines; but this wore off, and he became very sociable and funny, and they agreed to go into the bath together. How Tennison could venture to gambol in the same water with Leviathan, I cannot explain; but so it was: they frolicked about like two dolphins, though Hobbes must have been as old as the hills; and "in those intervals wherein they abstained from swimming and plunging themselves" (*i.e.* diving), "they discoursed of many things relating to the baths of the Ancients, and the Origine of Springs. When they had in this manner passed away an hour, they stepped out of the bath; and, having dried and cloathed themselves, they sate down in expectation of such a supper as the place afforded; designing to refresh themselves like the *Deipnosophistæ*, and rather to reason than to drink profoundly. But in this innocent intention they were interrupted by the disturbance arising from a little quarrel, in which some of the ruder people in the house were for a short time engaged. At this Mr. Hobbes seemed much concerned, though he was at some distance from the persons." And why was he concerned, gentlemen? No doubt, you fancy, from some benign and disinterested love of peace, worthy of an old man

[1] Chatsworth was then, as now, the superb seat of the Cavendishes in their highest branch—in those days Earl, at present Duke, of Devonshire. It is to the honour of this family that, through two generations, they gave an asylum to Hobbes. It is noticeable that Hobbes was born in the year of the Spanish Armada, *i.e.* in 1588: such, at least, is my belief. And, therefore, at this meeting with Tennison in 1670, he must have been about 82 years old.

and a philosopher. But listen—" For awhile he was not composed, but related it once or twice as to himself, with a low and careful, *i.e.*, anxious, tone, how Sextus Roscius was murthered after supper by the Balneæ Palatinæ. Of such general extent is that remark of Cicero, in relation to Epicurus the Atheist, of whom he observed, that he of all men dreaded most those things which he contemned—Death and the Gods." Merely because it was supper time, and in the nighbourhood of a bath, Mr. Hobbes must have the fate of Sextus Roscius. He must be mur*th*ered, because Sextus Roscius was mur*th*ered. What logic was there in this, unless to a man who was always dreaming of murder? Here was Leviathan, no longer afraid of the daggers of English cavaliers or French clergy, but " frightened from his propriety " by a row in an alehouse between some honest clod-hoppers of Derbyshire, whom his own gaunt scarecrow of a person, that belonged to quite another century, would have frightened out of their wits.

Malebranche, it will give you pleasure to hear, was murdered. The man who murdered him is well known: it was Bishop Berkeley. The story is familiar, though hitherto not put in a proper light. Berkeley, when a young man, went to Paris, and called on Père Malebranche. He found him in his cell cooking. Cooks have ever been a *genus irritabile;* authors still more so: Malebranche was both: a dispute arose; the old father, warm already, became warmer; culinary and metaphysical irritations united to derange his liver: he took to his bed, and died. Such is the common version of the story: " So the whole ear of Denmark is abused." The fact is, that the matter was hushed up, out of consideration for Berkeley, who (as Pope justly observes) had " every virtue under heaven: " else it was well known that Berkeley, feeling himself nettled by the waspishness of the old Frenchman, squared at him; a *turn-up* was the consequence: Malebranche was floored in the first round; the conceit was wholly taken out of him; and he would perhaps have given in; but Berkeley's blood was now up, and he insisted on the old Frenchman's retracting his doctrine of Occasional Causes. The vanity of the man was too great for this; and he fell a sacrifice to the impetuosity of Irish youth, combined with his own absurd obstinacy.

Leibnitz, being every way superior to Malebranche, one might, *a fortiori*, have counted on *his* being murdered; which, however, was not the case. I believe he was nettled at this neglect, and felt himself insulted by the security in which he passed his days.

In no other way can I explain his conduct at the latter end of his life, when he chose to grow very avaricious, and to hoard up large sums of gold, which he kept in his own house. This was at Vienna, where he died; and letters are still in existence, describing the immeasurable anxiety which he entertained for his throat. Still his ambition, for being *attempted* at least, was so great, that he would not forego the danger. A late English pedagogue, of Birmingham manufacture—viz., Dr. Parr—took a more selfish course under the same circumstance. He had amassed a considerable quantity of gold and silver plate, which was for some time deposited in his bedroom at his parsonage house, Hatton. But growing every day more afraid of being murdered, which he knew that he could not stand (and to which, indeed, he never had the slightest pretensions), he transferred the whole to the Hatton blacksmith; conceiving, no doubt, that the murder of a blacksmith would fall more lightly on the *salus reipublicæ*, than that of a pedagogue. But I have heard this greatly disputed; and it seems now generally agreed, that one good horse-shoe is worth about two and a quarter Spital sermons.[1]

As Leibnitz, though not murdered, may be said to have died, partly of the fear that he should be murdered, and partly of vexation that he was not, Kant, on the other hand—who manifested no ambition in that way—had a narrower escape from a murderer than any man we read of, except Des Cartes. So absurdly does fortune throw about her favours! The case is told, I think, in an anonymous life of this very great man. For health's sake, Kant imposed upon himself, at one time, a walk of six miles every day along a high-road. This fact becoming known to a man who had his private reasons for committing murder, at the third milestone from Königsberg, he waited for his "intended," who came up to time as duly as a mail-coach.

But for an accident, Kant was a dead man. This accident lay in the scrupulous, or what Mrs. Quickly would have called the *peevish*, morality of the murderer. An old professor, he fancied, might be laden with sins. Not so a young child. On

[1] "*Spital sermons:*"—Dr. Parr's chief public appearances as an author, after his original appearance in the famous Latin preface to Bellendĕnus (don't say Bellendēnus), occurred in certain sermons at periodic intervals, delivered on behalf of some hospital (I really forget what) which retained for its official designation the old word *Spital;* and thus it happened that the sermons themselves were generally known by the title of *Spital* sermons.

this consideration, he turned away from Kant at the critical moment, and soon after murdered a child of five years old. Such is the German account of the matter; but my opinion is, that the murderer was an amateur, who felt how little would be gained to the cause of good taste by murdering an old, arid, and adust metaphysician; there was no room for display, as the man could not possibly look more like a mummy when dead, than he had done alive.

Thus, gentlemen, I have traced the connection between philosophy and our art, until insensibly I find that I have wandered into our own era. This I shall not take any pains to characterise apart from that which preceded it, for, in fact, they have no distinct character. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, together with so much of the nineteenth as we have yet seen, jointly compose the Augustan age of murder. The finest work of the seventeenth century is, unquestionably, the murder of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey, which has my entire approbation. In the grand feature of *mystery*, which in some shape or other ought to colour every judicious attempt at murder, it is excellent; for the mystery is not yet dispersed. The attempts to fasten the murder upon the Papists, which would injure it as much as some well-known Correggios have been injured by the professional picture-cleaners, or would even ruin it by translating it into the spurious class of mere political or partisan murders, thoroughly wanting in the murderous *animus*, I exhort the society to discountenance. In fact, this notion is altogether baseless, and arose in pure Protestant fanaticism. Sir Edmondbury had not distinguished himself amongst the London magistrates by any severity against the Papists, or in favouring the attempts of zealots to enforce the penal laws against individuals. He had not armed against himself the animosities of any religious sect whatever. And as to the droppings of wax lights upon the dress of the corpse when first discovered in a ditch, from which it was inferred at the time that the priests attached to the Popish Queen's Chapel had been concerned in the murder, either these were mere fraudulent artifices devised by those who wished to fix the suspicion upon the Papists, or else the whole allegation—wax-droppings, and the suggested cause of the droppings—might be a bounce or fib of Bishop Burnet; who, as the Duchess of Portsmouth used to say, was the one great master of fibbing and romancing in the seventeenth century. At the same time, it must be observed

that the quantity of murder was not great in Sir Edmondbury's century, at least amongst our own artists; which, perhaps, is attributable to the want of enlightened patronage. *Sint Mæcenates, non deerunt, Flacce, Marones.* Consulting Grant's *Observations on the Bills of Mortality* (4th edition, Oxford, 1665), I find, that, out of 229,250, who died in London during one period of twenty years in the seventeenth century, not more than eighty-six were murdered; that is, about four three-tenths per annum. A small number this, gentlemen, to found an academy upon; and certainly, where the quantity is so small, we have a right to expect that the quality should be first-rate. Perhaps it was; yet still I am of opinion that the best artist in this century was not equal to the best in that which followed. For instance, however praiseworthy the case of Sir Edmondbury Godfrey may be (and nobody can be more sensible of its merits than I am), still, I cannot consent to place it on a level with that of Mrs. Ruscombe of Bristol, either as to originality of design, or boldness and breadth of style. This good lady's murder took place early in the reign of George III.—a reign which was notoriously favourable to the arts generally. She lived in College Green, with a single maid-servant, neither of them having any pretension to the notice of history, but what they derived from the great artist whose workmanship I am recording. One fine morning, when all Bristol was alive and in motion, some suspicion arising, the neighbours forced an entrance into the house, and found Mrs. Ruscombe murdered in her bedroom, and the servant murdered on the stairs: this was at noon; and, not more than two hours before, both mistress and servant had been seen alive. To the best of my remembrance, this was in 1764; upwards of sixty years, therefore, have now elapsed, and yet the artist is still undiscovered. The suspicions of posterity have settled upon two pretenders—a baker and a chimney-sweeper. But posterity is wrong; no unpractised artist could have conceived so bold an idea as that of a noonday murder in the heart of a great city. It was no obscure baker, gentlemen, or anonymous chimney-sweeper, be assured, that executed this work. I know who it was. (*Here there was a general buzz, which at length broke out into open applause; upon which the lecturer blushed, and went on with much earnestness.*) For heaven's sake, gentlemen, do not mistake me; it was not I that did it. I have not the vanity to think myself equal to any such achievement; be assured that you greatly overrate my poor talents; Mrs. Ruscombe's affair was far beyond

my slender abilities. But I came to know who the artist was, from a celebrated surgeon who assisted at his dissection. This gentleman had a private museum in the way of his profession, one corner of which was occupied by a cast from a man of remarkably fine proportions.

"That," said the surgeon, "is a cast from the celebrated Lancashire highwayman, who concealed his profession for some time from his neighbours, by drawing woollen stockings over his horse's legs, and in that way muffling the clatter which he must else have made in riding up a flagged alley that led to his stable. At the time of his execution for highway robbery, I was studying under Cruickshank: and the man's figure was so uncommonly fine, that no money or exertion was spared to get into possession of him with the least possible delay. By the connivance of the under-sheriff, he was cut down within the legal time, and instantly put into a chaise-and-four; so that, when he reached Cruickshank's, he was positively not dead. Mr. ——, a young student at that time, had the honour of giving him the *coup de grace*, and finishing the sentence of the law." This remarkable anecdote, which seemed to imply that all the gentlemen in the dissecting-room were amateurs of our class, struck me a good deal; and I was repeating it one day to a Lancashire lady, who thereupon informed me that she had herself lived in the neighbourhood of that highwayman, and well remembered two circumstances, which combined, in the opinion of all his neighbours, to fix upon him the credit of Mrs. Ruscombe's affair. One was, the fact of his absence for a whole fortnight at the period of that murder; the other, that, within a very little time after, the neighbourhood of this highwayman was deluged with dollars: now, Mrs. Ruscombe was known to have hoarded about two thousand of that coin. Be the artist, however, who he might, the affair remains a durable monument of his genius; for such was the impression of awe, and the sense of power left behind, by the strength of conception manifested in this murder, that no tenant (as I was told in 1810) had been found up to that time for Mrs. Ruscombe's house.

But, whilst I thus eulogise the Ruscombian case, let me not be supposed to overlook the many other specimens of extraordinary merit spread over the face of this century. Such cases, indeed, as that of Miss Bland, or of Captain Donnellan, and Sir Theophilus Boughton, shall never have any countenance from me. Fie on these dealers in poison, say I: can they not keep to the old honest way of cutting throats, without introducing

such abominable innovations from Italy? I consider all these poisoning cases, compared with the legitimate style, as no better than wax-work by the side of sculpture, or a lithographic print by the side of a fine Volpato. But, dismissing these, there remain many excellent works of art in a pure style, such as nobody need be ashamed to own; and this every candid connoisseur will admit. *Candid*, observe, I say; for great allowances must be made in these cases; no artist can ever be sure of carrying through his own fine preconception. Awkward disturbances will arise; people will not submit to have their throats cut quietly; they will run, they will kick, they will bite; and whilst the portrait painter often has to complain of too much torpor in his subject, the artist in our line is generally embarrassed by too much animation. At the same time, however disagreeable to the artist, this tendency in murder to excite and irritate the subject is certainly one of its advantages to the world in general, which we ought not to overlook, since it favours the development of latest talent. Jeremy Taylor notices with admiration the extraordinary leaps which people will take under the influence of fear. There was a striking instance of this in the recent case of the M'Keans: the boy cleared a height, such as he will never clear again to his dying day. Talents also of the most brilliant description for thumping, and, indeed, for all the gymnastic exercises, have sometimes been developed by the panic which accompanies our artists; talents else buried and hid under a bushel, to the possessors, as much as to their friends. I remember an interesting illustration of this fact, in a case which I learned in Germany.

Riding one day in the neighbourhood of Munich, I overtook a distinguished amateur of our society, whose name, for obvious reasons, I shall conceal. This gentleman informed me that, finding himself wearied with the frigid pleasures (such he esteemed them) of mere amateurship, he had quitted England for the Continent—meaning to practise a little professionally. For this purpose he resorted to Germany, conceiving the police in that part of Europe to be more heavy and drowsy than elsewhere. His *début* as a practitioner took place at Mannheim; and, knowing me to be a brother amateur, he freely communicated the whole of his maiden adventure. "Opposite to my lodging," said he, "lived a baker: he was somewhat of a miser, and lived quite alone. Whether it were his great expanse of chalky face, or what else, I know not, but the fact was, I 'fancied' him, and resolved to commence business upon his

throat, which, by the way, he always carried bare—a fashion which is very irritating to my desires. Precisely at eight o'clock in the evening, I observed that he regularly shut up his windows. One night I watched him when thus engaged—bolted in after him—locked the door—and addressing him with great suavity, acquainted him with the nature of my errand; at the same time advising him to make no resistance, which would be mutually unpleasant. So saying, I drew out my tools; and was proceeding to operate. But at this spectacle the baker, who seemed to have been struck by catalepsy at my first announcement, awoke into tremendous agitation. 'I will *not* be murdered!' he shrieked aloud; 'what for will I' (meaning *shall* I) 'lose my precious throat?'—'What for?' said I; 'if for no other reason, for this—that you put alum into your bread. But no matter, alum or no alum (for I was resolved to forestall any argument on that point), know that I am a virtuoso in the art of murder—am desirous of improving myself in its details—and am enamoured of your vast surface of throat, to which I am determined to be a customer.'—'Is it so?' said he, 'but I'll find you a customer in another line;' and so saying, he threw himself into a boxing attitude. The very idea of his boxing struck me as ludicrous. It is true, a London baker had distinguished himself in the ring, and became known to fame under the title of the Master of the Rolls; but he was young and unspoiled: whereas, this man was a monstrous feather-bed in person, fifty years old, and totally out of condition. Spite of all this, however, and contending against me, who am a master in the art, he made so desperate a defence, that many times I feared he might turn the tables upon me; and that I, an amateur, might be murdered by a rascally baker. What a situation! Minds of sensibility will sympathise with my anxiety. How severe it was, you may understand by this, that for the first thirteen rounds the baker positively had the advantage. Round the 14th, I received a blow on the right eye, which closed it up; in the end, I believe, this was my salvation; for the anger it roused in me was so great, that, in the next, and every one of the three following rounds, I floored the baker.

"Round 19th. The baker came up piping, and manifestly the worse for wear. His geometrical exploits in the four last rounds had done him no good. However, he showed some skill in stopping a message which I was sending to his cadaverous mug; in delivering which, my foot slipped, and I went down.

"Round 20th. Surveying the baker, I became ashamed of having been so much bothered by a shapeless mass of dough; and I went in fiercely, and administered some severe punishment. A rally took place—both went down—baker undermost—ten to three on amateur.

"Round 21st. The baker jumped up with surprising agility; indeed, he managed his pins capitally, and fought wonderfully, considering that he was drenched in perspiration; but the shine was now taken out of him, and his game was the mere effect of panic. It was now clear that he could not last much longer. In the course of this round we tried the weaving system, in which I had greatly the advantage, and hit him repeatedly on the conk. My reason for this was, that his conk was covered with carbuncles; and I thought I should vex him by taking such liberties with his conk, which in fact I did.

"The three next rounds, the master of the rolls staggered about like a cow on the ice. Seeing how matters stood, in round 24th I whispered something into his ear, which sent him down like a shot. It was nothing more than my private opinion of the value of his throat at an annuity office. This little confidential whisper affected him greatly; the very perspiration was frozen on his face, and for the next two rounds I had it all my own way. And when I called *time* for the 27th round, he lay like a log on the floor."

After which, said I to the amateur, "It may be presumed that you accomplished your purpose." "You are right," said he, mildly, "I did; and a great satisfaction, you know, it was to my mind, for by this means I killed two birds with one stone;" meaning that he had both thumped the baker and murdered him. Now, for the life of me, I could not see *that;* for, on the contrary, to my mind it appeared that he had taken two stones to kill one bird, having been obliged to take the conceit out of him first with his fist, and then with his tools. But no matter for his logic. The moral of his story was good, for it showed what an astonishing stimulus to latent talent is contained in any reasonable prospect of being murdered. A pursy, unwieldy, half cataleptic baker of Mannheim had absolutely fought seven-and-twenty rounds with an accomplished English boxer, merely upon this inspiration; so greatly was natural genius exalted and sublimed by the genial presence of his murderer.

Really, gentlemen, when one hears of such things as these, it becomes a duty, perhaps, a little to soften that extreme asperity with which most men speak of murder. To hear people

talk, you would suppose that all the disadvantages and inconveniences were on the side of being murdered, and that there were none at all in *not* being murdered. But considerate men think otherwise. "Certainly," says Jeremy Taylor, it is a less temporal evil to fall by the rudeness of a sword than the violence of a fever: and the axe" (to which he might have added the ship-carpenter's mallet and the crowbar), "a much less affliction than a strangury." Very true; the bishop talks like a wise man and an amateur, as I am sure he was; and another great philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, was equally above the vulgar prejudices on this subject. He declares it to be one of "the noblest functions of reason to know whether it is time to walk out of the world or not." (Book iii., Coller's Translation.) No sort of knowledge being rarer than this, surely *that* man must be a most philanthropic character, who undertakes to instruct people in this branch of knowledge gratis, and at no little hazard to himself. All this, however, I throw out only in the way of speculation to future moralists; declaring in the meantime my own private conviction, that very few men commit murder upon philanthropic or patriotic principles, and repeating what I have already said once at least—that, as to the majority of murderers, they are very incorrect characters.

With respect to the Williams' murders, the sublimest and most entire in their excellence that ever were committed, I shall not allow myself to speak incidentally. Nothing less than an entire lecture, or even an entire course of lectures, would suffice to expound their merits.[1] But one curious fact connected with this case I shall mention, because it seems to imply that the blaze of his genius absolutely dazzled the eye of criminal justice. You all remember, I doubt not, that the instruments with which he executed his first great work (the murder of the Marrs) were a ship-carpenter's mallet and a knife. Now, the mallet belonged to an old Swede, one John Peterson, and bore his initials. This instrument Williams left behind him in Marr's house, and it fell into the hands of the magistrates. But, gentlemen, it is a fact that the publication of this circumstance of the initials led immediately to the apprehension of Williams, and, if made earlier, would have prevented his second great work (the murder of the Williamsons), which took place precisely twelve days after. Yet the magistrates kept back this fact from the public for the entire twelve days, and until that second work was accomplished. That finished, they published

[1] See the *Postscript* at the end of this paper.

it, apparently feeling that Williams had now done enough for his fame, and that his glory was at length placed beyond the reach of accident.

As to Mr. Thurtell's case, I know not what to say. Naturally, I have every disposition to think highly of my predecessor in the chair of this society; and I acknowledge that his lectures were unexceptionable. But, speaking ingenuously, I do really think that his principal performance, as an artist, has been much overrated. I admit, that at first I was myself carried away by the general enthusiasm. On the morning when the murder was made known in London, there was the fullest meeting of amateurs that I have ever known since the days of Williams; old bedridden connoisseurs, who had got into a peevish way of sneering and complaining "that there was nothing doing," now hobbled down to our club-room: such hilarity, such benign expression of general satisfaction, I have rarely witnessed. On every side you saw people shaking hands, congratulating each other, and forming dinner parties for the evening; and nothing was to be heard but triumphant challenges of—"Well! will *this* do?" "Is *this* the right thing?" "Are you satisfied at last?" But, in the middle of the row, I remember, we all grew silent, on hearing the old cynical amateur L. S—— stumping along with his wooden leg; he entered the room with his usual scowl; and, as he advanced, he continued to growl and stutter the whole way—"Mere plagiarism—base plagiarism from hints that I threw out! Besides, his style is as harsh as Albert Durer, and as coarse as Fuseli." Many thought that this was mere jealousy, and general waspishness; but I confess that, when the first glow of enthusiasm had subsided, I have found most judicious critics to agree that there was something *falsetto* in the style of Thurtell. The fact is, he was a member of our society, which naturally gave a friendly bias to our judgments; and his person was universally familiar to the "fancy," which gave him, with the whole London public, a temporary popularity, that his pretensions are not capable of supporting; for *opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat.* There was, however, an unfinished design of Thurtell's for the murder of a man with a pair of dumb-bells, which I admired greatly; it was a mere outline, that he never filled in; but to my mind it seemed every way superior to his chief work. I remember that there was great regret expressed by some amateurs that this sketch should have been left in an unfinished state: but there I cannot agree with them; for the fragments and first

bold outlines of original artists have often a felicity about them which is apt to vanish in the management of the details.

The case of the M'Keans [1] I consider far beyond the vaunted performance of Thurtell—indeed, above all praise; and bearing that relation, in fact, to the immortal works of Williams, which the *Æneid* bears to the *Iliad*.

But it is now time that I should say a few words about the principles of murder, not with a view to regulate your practice, but your judgment: as to old women, and the mob of newspaper readers, they are pleased with anything, provided it is bloody enough. But the mind of sensibility requires something more. *First*, then, let us speak of the kind of person who is adapted to the purpose of the murderer; *secondly*, of the place where; *thirdly*, of the time when, and other little circumstances.

As to the person, I suppose it is evident that he ought to be a good man; because, if he were not, he might himself, by possibility, be contemplating murder at the very time; and such "diamond-cut-diamond" tussles, though pleasant enough where nothing better is stirring, are really not what a critic can allow himself to call murders. I could mention some people (I name no names) who have been murdered by other people in a dark lane; and so far all seemed correct enough; but, on looking farther into the matter, the public have become aware that the murdered party was himself, at the moment, planning to rob his murderer, at the least, and possibly to murder him, if he had been strong enough. Whenever that is the case, or may be thought to be the case, farewell to all the genuine effects of the art. For the final purpose of murder, considered as a fine art, is precisely the same as that of tragedy, in Aristotle's account of it; viz., "to cleanse the heart by means of pity and terror." Now, terror there may be, but how can there be any pity for one tiger destroyed by another tiger?

It is also evident that the person selected ought not to be a public character. For instance, no judicious artist would have attempted to murder Abraham Newland.[2] For the case was this: everybody read so much about Abraham Newland, and so few people ever saw him, that to the general belief he was

[1] See the *Postscript*.

[2] Abraham Newland is now utterly forgotten. But when this was written, his name had not ceased to ring in British ears, as the most familiar and most significant that perhaps has ever existed. It was the name which appeared on the face of all Bank of England notes, great or small; and had been, for more than a quarter of a century (especially through the whole career of the French Revolution), a shorthand expression for paper money in its safest form.

a mere abstract idea. And I remember that once, when I happened to mention that I had dined at a coffee-house in company with Abraham Newland, everybody looked scornfully at me, as though I had pretended to have played at billiards with Prester John, or to have had an affair of honour with the Pope. And, by the way, the Pope would be a very improper person to murder: for he has such a virtual ubiquity as the father of Christendom, and, like the cuckoo, is so often heard but never seen, that I suspect most people regard *him* also as an abstract idea. Where, indeed, a public man is in the habit of giving dinners, "with every delicacy of the season," the case is very different: every person is satisfied that *he* is no abstract idea; and, therefore, there can be no impropriety in murdering him; only that his murder will fall into the class of assassinations, which I have not yet treated.

Thirdly. The subject chosen ought to be in good health: for it is absolutely barbarous to murder a sick person, who is usually quite unable to bear it. On this principle, no tailor ought to be chosen who is above twenty-five, for after that age he is sure to be dyspeptic. Or at least, if a man will hunt in that warren, he will of course think it his duty, on the old established equation, to murder some multiple of 9—say 18, 27, or 36. And here, in this benign attention to the comfort of sick people, you will observe the usual effect of a fine art to soften and refine the feelings. The world in general, gentlemen, are very bloody-minded; and all they want in a murder is a copious effusion of blood; gaudy display in this point is enough for *them.* But the enlightened connoisseur is more refined in his taste; and from our art, as from all the other liberal arts when thoroughly mastered, the result is, to humanise the heart; so true is it, that

> "Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes,
> Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros."

A philosophic friend, well known for his philanthropy and general benignity, suggests that the subject chosen ought also to have a family of young children wholly dependent on his exertions, by way of deepening the pathos. And, undoubtedly, this is a judicious caution. Yet I would not insist too keenly on such a condition. Severe good taste unquestionably suggests it; but still, where the man was otherwise unobjectionable in point of morals and health, I would not look with too curious a jealousy to a restriction which might have the effect of narrowing the artist's sphere.

So much for the person. As to the time, the place, and the tools, I have many things to say, which at present I have no room for. The good sense of the practitioner has usually directed him to night and privacy. Yet there have not been wanting cases where this rule was departed from with excellent effect. In respect to time, Mrs. Ruscombe's case is a beautiful exception, which I have already noticed; and in respect both to time and place, there is a fine exception in the annals of Edinburgh (year 1805), familiar to every child in Edinburgh, but which has unaccountably been defrauded of its due portion of fame amongst English amateurs. The case I mean is that of a porter to one of the banks, who was murdered, whilst carrying a bag of money, in broad daylight, on turning out of the High Street, one of the most public streets in Europe; and the murderer is to this hour undiscovered.

> "Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus,
> Singula dum capti circumvectamur amore."

And now, gentlemen, in conclusion, let me again solemnly disclaim all pretensions on my own part to the character of a professional man. I never attempted any murder in my life, except in the year 1801, upon the body of a tom-cat; and *that* turned out differently from my intention. My purpose, I own, was downright murder. "Semper ego auditor tantum?" said I, "nunquamne reponam?" And I went downstairs in search of Tom at one o'clock on a dark night, with the "animus," and no doubt with the fiendish look, of a murderer. But when I found him, he was in the act of plundering the pantry of bread and other things. Now this gave a new turn to the affair; for the time being one of general scarcity, when even Christians were reduced to the use of potato-bread, rice-bread, and all sorts of things, it was downright treason in a tom-cat to be wasting good wheaten-bread in the way he was doing. It instantly became a patriotic duty to put him to death; and, as I raised aloft and shook the glittering steel, I fancied myself rising, like Brutus, effulgent from a crowd of patriots, and, as I stabbed him, I

> "Call'd aloud on Tully's name,
> And bade the father of his country hail!"

Since then, what wandering thoughts I may have had of attempting the life of an ancient ewe, of a superannuated hen, and such "small deer," are locked up in the secrets of my own breast; but, for the higher departments of the art, I confess

myself to be utterly unfit. My ambition does not rise so high. No, gentlemen, in the words of Horace,

> " Fungar vice cotis, acutum
> Reddere quæ ferrum valet, exsors ipsa secandi."

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPER ON MURDER, CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE FINE ARTS

A good many years ago, the reader may remember that I came forward in the character of a *dilettante* in murder. Perhaps *dilettante* is too strong a word. *Connoisseur* is better suited to the scruples and infirmity of public taste. I suppose there is no harm in *that*, at least. A man is not bound to put his eyes, ears, and understanding into his breeches-pocket when he meets with a murder. If he is not in a downright comatose state, I suppose he must see that one murder is better or worse than another, in point of good taste. Murders have their little differences and shades of merit, as well as statues, pictures, oratorios, cameos, intaglios, or what not. You may be angry with the man for talking too much, or too publicly (as to the too much, that I deny—a man can never cultivate his taste too highly); but you must allow him to think, at any rate. Well, would you believe it? all my neighbours came to hear of that little æsthetic essay which I had published; and, unfortunately, hearing at the very same time of a club that I was connected with, and a dinner at which I presided—both tending to the same little object as the essay, viz., the diffusion of a just taste among Her [1] Majesty's subjects, they got up the most barbarous calumnies against me. In particular, they said that I, or that the club (which comes to the same thing), had offered bounties on well-conducted homicides—with a scale of drawbacks, in case of any one defect or flaw, according to a table issued to private friends. Now, let me tell the whole truth about the dinner and the club, and it will be seen how malicious the world is. But first, confidentially, allow me to say what my real principles are upon the matter in question.

As to murder, I never committed one in my life. It's a well-

[1] *Her* Majesty:—In the lecture, having occasion to refer to the reigning sovereign, I said " *His* Majesty;" for at that time William IV. was on the throne: but between the lecture and this supplement had occurred the accession of our present Queen.

known thing amongst all my friends. I can get a paper to certify as much, signed by lots of people. Indeed, if you come to that, I doubt whether many people could produce as strong a certificate. Mine would be as big as a breakfast tablecloth. There is indeed one member of the club, who pretends to say he caught me once making too free with his throat on a club night, after everybody else had retired. But, observe, he shuffles in his story according to his state of civilisation. When not far gone, he contents himself with saying that he caught me ogling his throat; and that I was melancholy for some weeks after, and that my voice sounded in a way expressing, to the nice ear of a connoisseur, *the sense of opportunities lost;* but the club all know that he is a disappointed man himself, and that he speaks querulously at times about the fatal neglect of a man's coming abroad without his tools. Besides, all this is an affair between two amateurs, and everybody makes allowances for little asperities and fibs in such a case. "But," say you, "if no murderer, you may have encouraged, or even have bespoken a murder." No, upon my honour—no. And that was the very point I wished to argue for your satisfaction. The truth is, I am a very particular man in everything relating to murder; and perhaps I carry my delicacy too far. The Stagirite most justly, and possibly with a view to my case, placed virtue in the τὸ μέσον, or middle point between two extremes. A golden mean is certainly what every man should aim at. But it is easier talking than doing; and, my infirmity being notoriously too much milkiness of heart, I find it difficult to maintain that steady equatorial line between the two poles of too much murder on the one hand, and too little on the other. I am too soft—and people get excused through me—nay, go through life without an attempt made upon them, that ought *not* to be excused. I believe, if I had the management of things, there would hardly be a murder from year's end to year's end. In fact, I'm for peace, and quietness, and fawningness, and what may be styled *knocking-underness*. A man came to me as a candidate for the place of my servant, just then vacant. He had the reputation of having dabbled a little in our art; some said, not without merit. What startled me, however, was, that he supposed this art to be part of his regular duties in my service, and talked of having it considered in his wages. Now, that was a thing I would not allow; so I said at once, "Richard (or James, as the case might be), you misunderstand my character. If a man will and must practise this difficult (and allow me to add,

dangerous) branch of art—if he has an overruling genius for it, why, in that case, all I say is, that he might as well pursue his studies whilst living in my service as in another's. And also, I may observe, that it can do no harm either to himself or to the subject on whom he operates, that he should be guided by men of more taste than himself. Genius may do much, but long study of the art must always entitle a man to offer advice. So far I will go—general principles I will suggest. But as to any particular case, once for all I will have nothing to do with it. Never tell me of any special work of art you are meditating —I set my face against it *in toto*. For, if once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination. Once begin upon this downward path, you never know where you are to stop. Many a man has dated his ruin from some murder or other that perhaps he thought little of at the time. *Principiis obsta*—that's my rule." Such was my speech, and I have always acted up to it; so, if that is not being virtuous, I should be glad to know what is. But now about the dinner and the club. The club was not particularly of my creation; it arose pretty much as other similar associations, for the propagation of truth and the communication of new ideas; rather from the necessities of things, than upon any one man's suggestion. As to the dinner, if any man more than another could be held responsible for that, it was a member known amongst us by the name of *Toad-in-the-hole*. He was so called from his gloomy misanthropical disposition, which led him into constant disparagements of all modern murders as vicious abortions, belonging to no authentic school of art. The finest performances of our own age he snarled at cynically; and at length this querulous humour grew upon him so much, and he became so notorious as a *laudator temporis acti*, that few people cared to seek his society. This made him still more fierce and truculent. He went about muttering and growling; wherever you met him, he was soliloquising, and saying, "despicable pretender—without grouping—without two ideas upon handling—without"—and there you lost him. At length existence seemed to be painful to him; he rarely spoke, he seemed conversing with phantoms in the air; his housekeeper informed us that his reading was nearly confined to *God's Revenge upon Murder*, by Reynolds, and a more ancient book of the same title, noticed by Sir Walter Scott in his *Fortunes of Nigel*. Sometimes, per-

haps, he might read in the *Newgate Calendar* down to the year 1788, but he never looked into a book more recent. In fact, he had a theory with regard to the French Revolution, as having been the great cause of degeneration in murder. "Very soon, sir," he used to say, "men will have lost the art of killing poultry: the very rudiments of the art will have perished!" In the year 1811, he retired from general society. Toad-in-the-hole was no more seen in any public resort. We missed him from his wonted haunts—"nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he." By the side of the main conduit his listless length at noontide he would stretch, and pore upon the filth that muddled by. "Even dogs," this pensive moralist would say, "are not what they were, sir—not what they should be. I remember in my grandfather's time that some dogs had an idea of murder. I have known a mastiff, sir, that lay in ambush for a rival, yes, sir, and finally murder him, with pleasing circumstances and good taste. I also was on intimate terms of acquaintance with a tom-cat that was an assassin. But now" —and then, the subject growing too painful, he dashed his hand to his forehead, and went off abruptly in a homeward direction towards his favourite conduit, where he was seen by an amateur in such a state, that he thought it dangerous to address him. Soon after Toad shut himself entirely up; it was understood that he had resigned himself to melancholy; and at length the prevailing notion was, that Toad-in-the-hole had hanged himself.

The world was wrong *there*, as it had been on some other questions. Toad-in-the-hole might be sleeping, but dead he was not; and of that we soon had ocular proof. One morning in 1812, an amateur surprised us with the news that he had seen Toad-in-the-hole brushing with hasty steps the dews away, to meet the postman by the conduit side. Even that was something: how much more, to hear that he had shaved his beard—had laid aside his sad-coloured clothes, and was adorned like a bridegroom of ancient days. What could be the meaning of all this? Was Toad-in-the-hole mad? or how? Soon after the secret was explained—in more than a figurative sense "the murder was out." For in came the London morning papers, by which it appeared that but three days before a murder, the most superb of the century by many degrees, had occurred in the heart of London. I need hardly say, that this was the great exterminating *chef-d'œuvre* of Williams at Mr. Marr's, No. 29, Ratcliffe Highway. That was the *début* of the artist; at least

for anything the public knew. What occurred at Mr. Williamson's twelve nights afterwards — the second work turned out from the same chisel—some people pronounced even superior. But Toad-in-the-hole always "reclaimed," he was even angry, at such comparisons. "This vulgar *gout de comparaison*, as La Bruyère calls it," he would often remark, "will be our ruin; each work has its own separate characteristics—each in and for itself is incomparable. One, perhaps, might suggest the *Iliad* —the other the *Odyssey*: but what do you get by such comparisons? Neither ever was, or will be surpassed; and when you've talked for hours, you must still come back to that." Vain, however, as all criticism might be, he often said that volumes might be written on each case for itself; and he even proposed to publish in quarto on the subject.

Meantime, how had Toad-in-the-hole happened to hear of this great work of art so early in the morning? He had received an account by express, despatched by a correspondent in London, who watched the progress of art on *Toad's* behalf, with a general commission to send off a special express, at whatever cost, in the event of any estimable works appearing. The express arrived in the night-time; Toad-in-the-hole was then gone to bed; he had been muttering and grumbling for hours, but of course he was called up. On reading the account, he threw his arms round the express, declared him his brother and his preserver, and expressed his regret at not having it in his power to knight him. We, amateurs, having heard that he was abroad, and therefore had *not* hanged himself, made sure of soon seeing him amongst us. Accordingly he soon arrived; seized every man's hand as he passed him—wrung it almost frantically, and kept ejaculating, "Why, now, here's something like a murder!—this is the real thing—this is genuine—this is what you can approve, can recommend to a friend: this—says every man, on reflection—this is the thing that ought to be! Such works are enough to make us all young." And in fact the general opinion is, that Toad-in-the-hole would have died but for this regeneration of art, which he called a second age of Leo the Tenth; and it was our duty, he said, solemnly to commemorate it. At present, and *en attendant*, he proposed that the club should meet and dine together. A dinner, therefore, was given by the club; to which all amateurs were invited from a distance of one hundred miles.

Of this dinner, there are ample shorthand notes amongst the archives of the club. But they are not "extended," to

speak diplomatically; and the reporter, who only could give the whole report, *in extenso*, is missing—I believe murdered. Meantime, in years long after that day, and on an occasion perhaps equally interesting, viz., the turning up of Thugs and Thuggism, another dinner was given. Of this I myself kept notes, for fear of another accident to the shorthand reporter. And I here subjoin them. Toad-in-the-hole, I must mention, was present at this dinner. In fact, it was one of its sentimental incidents. Being as old as the valleys at the dinner of 1812, naturally he was as old as the hills at the Thug dinner of 1838. He had taken to wearing his beard again; why, or with what view, it passes my persimmon to tell you. But so it was. And his appearance was most benign and venerable. Nothing could equal the angelic radiance of his smile, as he inquired after the unfortunate reporter (whom, as a piece of private scandal, I should tell you that he was himself supposed to have murdered in a rapture of creative art): the answer was, with roars of laughter, from the under-sheriff of our county—"Non est inventus." Toad-in-the-hole laughed outrageously at this: in fact, we all thought he was choking; and, at the earnest request of the company, a musical composer furnished a most beautiful glee upon the occasion, which was sung five times after dinner, with universal applause and inextinguishable laughter, the words being these (and the chorus so contrived, as most beautifully to mimic the peculiar laughter of Toad-in-the-hole):—

"Et interrogatum est à Toad-in-the-hole—Ubi est ille reporter?
Et responsum est cum cachinno—*Non est inventus.*"

Chorus.

"Deinde iteratum est ab omnibus, cum cachinnatione undulante trepidante—*Non est inventus.*"

Toad-in-the-hole, I ought to mention, about nine years before, when an express from Edinburgh brought him the earliest intelligence of the Burke-and-Hare revolution in the art, went mad upon the spot; and, instead of a pension to the express for even one life, or a knighthood, endeavoured to Burke him; in consequence of which he was put into a strait-waistcoat. And that was the reason we had no dinner then. But now all of us were alive and kicking, strait-waistcoaters and others; in fact, not one absentee was reported upon the entire roll. There were also many foreign amateurs present.

Dinner being over, and the cloth drawn, there was a general call made for the new glee of *Non est inventus;* but, as this

would have interfered with the requisite gravity of the company during the earlier toasts, I overruled the call. After the national toasts had been given, the first official toast of the day was, *The Old Man of the Mountains*—drunk in solemn silence.

Toad-in-the-hole returned thanks in a neat speech. He likened himself to the Old Man of the Mountains, in a few brief allusions, that made the company yell with laughter; and he concluded with giving the health of

Mr. Von Hammer, with many thanks to him for his learned History of the Old Man and his subjects the assassins.

Upon this I rose and said, that doubtless most of the company were aware of the distinguished place assigned by orientalists to the very learned Turkish scholar, Von Hammer the Austrian; that he had made the profoundest researches into our art, as connected with those early and eminent artists, the Syrian assassins in the period of the Crusaders; that his work had been for several years deposited, as a rare treasure of art, in the library of the club. Even the author's name, gentlemen, pointed him out as the historian of our art—Von Hammer——

"Yes, yes," interrupted Toad-in-the-hole, "Von Hammer—he's the man for a *malleus hæreticorum*. You all know what consideration Williams bestowed on the hammer, or the ship-carpenter's mallet, which is the same thing. Gentlemen, I give you another great hammer—Charles the Hammer, the Marteau, or, in old French, the Martel—he hammered the Saracens till they were all as dead as door-nails."

"*Charles the Hammer*, with all the honours."

But the explosion of Toad-in-the-hole, together with the uproarious cheers for the grandpapa of Charlemagne, had now made the company unmanageable. The orchestra was again challenged with shouts the stormiest for the new glee. I foresaw a tempestuous evening; and I ordered myself to be strengthened with three waiters on each side; the vice-president with as many. Symptoms of unruly enthusiasm were beginning to show out; and I own that I myself was considerably excited, as the orchestra opened with its storm of music, and the impassioned glee began—"Et interrogatum est à Toad-in-the-hole—Ubi est ille Reporter?" And the frenzy of the passion became absolutely convulsing, as the full chorus fell in—"Et iteratum est ab omnibus—Non est inventus."

The next toast was—*The Jewish Sicarii*.

Upon which I made the following explanation to the company:—"Gentlemen, I am sure it will interest you all to hear

that the assassins, ancient as they were, had a race of predecessors in the very same country. All over Syria, but particularly in Palestine, during the early years of the Emperor Nero, there was a band of murderers, who prosecuted their studies in a very novel manner. They did not practise in the night-time, or in lonely places; but, justly considering that great crowds are in themselves a sort of darkness by means of the dense pressure, and the impossibility of finding out who it was that gave the blow, they mingled with mobs everywhere; particularly at the great paschal feast in Jerusalem; where they actually had the audacity, as Josephus assures us, to press into the temple—and whom should they choose for operating upon but Jonathan himself, the Pontifex Maximus? They murdered him, gentlemen, as beautifully as if they had had him alone on a moonless night in a dark lane. And when it was asked, who was the murderer, and where he was——"

"Why, then, it was answered," interrupted Toad-in-the-hole, "'*Non est inventus.*'" And then, in spite of all I could do or say, the orchestra opened, and the whole company began—"Et interrogatum est à Toad-in-the-hole—Ubi est ille Sicarius? Et responsum est ab omnibus—*Non est inventus.*"

When the tempestuous chorus had subsided, I began again:—"Gentlemen, you will find a very circumstantial account of the Sicarii in at least three different parts of Josephus; once in Book XX., sec. v., c. 8, of his *Antiquities;* once in Book I. of his *Wars:* but in sec. x. of the chapter first cited you will find a particular description of their tooling. This is what he says:—'They tooled with small scimitars not much different from the Persian *acinacæ*, but more curved, and for all the world most like the Roman semi-lunar *sicæ*.' It is perfectly magnificent, gentlemen, to hear the sequel of their history. Perhaps the only case on record where a regular army of murderers was assembled, a *justus exercitus*, was in the case of these *Sicarii*. They mustered in such strength in the wilderness, that Festus himself was obliged to march against them with the Roman legionary force. A pitched battle ensued; and this army of amateurs was all cut to pieces in the desert. Heavens, gentlemen, what a sublime picture! The Roman legions—the wilderness—Jerusalem in the distance—an army of murderers in the foreground!"

The next toast was—"To the further improvement of Tooling, and thanks to the Committee for their services."

Mr. L., on behalf of the Committee who had reported on that

subject, returned thanks. He made an interesting extract from the report, by which it appeared how very much stress had been laid formerly on the mode of tooling by the fathers, both Greek and Latin. In confirmation of this pleasing fact, he made a very striking statement in reference to the earliest work of antediluvian art. Father Mersenne, that learned French Roman Catholic, in page one thousand four hundred and thirty-one [1] of his operose Commentary on Genesis, mentions, on the authority of several rabbis, that the quarrel of Cain with Abel was about a young woman; that, according to various accounts, Cain had tooled with his teeth (Abelem fuisse *morsibus* dilaceratum à Cain); according to many others, with the jaw-bone of an ass, which is the tooling adopted by most painters. But it is pleasing to the mind of sensibility to know that, as science expanded, sounder views were adopted. One author contends for a pitchfork, St. Chrysostom for a sword, Irenæus for a scythe, and Prudentius, the Christian poet of the fourth century, for a hedging-bill. This last writer delivers his opinion thus:—

> " Frater, probatæ sanctitatis æmulus,
> Germana curvo colla frangit sarculo: "

i.e., his brother, jealous of his attested sanctity, fractures his fraternal throat with a curved hedging-bill. " All which is respectfully submitted by your committee, not so much as decisive of the question (for it is not), but in order to impress upon the youthful mind the importance which has ever been attached to the quality of the tooling by such men as Chrysostom and Irenæus."

" Irenæus, be hanged! " said Toad-in-the-hole, who now rose impatiently to give the next toast:—" Our Irish friends; wishing them a speedy revolution in their mode of tooling, as well as in everything else connected with the art! "

" Gentlemen, I'll tell you the plain truth. Every day of the year we take up a paper, we read the opening of a murder. We say, this is good, this is charming, this is excellent! But, behold you! scarcely have we read a little farther, before the word Tipperary or Ballina-something betrays the Irish manufacture. Instantly we loathe it; we call to the waiter; we say, 'Waiter, take away this paper; send it out of the house; it is absolutely a scandal in the nostrils of all just taste.' I appeal to every man, whether, on finding a murder (otherwise perhaps promising enough) to be Irish, he does not feel himself as much

[1] " Page one thousand four hundred and thirty-one: "—*literally*, good reader, and no joke at all.

insulted as when, Madeira being ordered, he finds it to be Cape; or when, taking up what he takes to be a mushroom, it turns out what children call a toad-stool. Tithes, politics, something wrong in principle, vitiate every Irish murder. Gentlemen, this must be reformed, or Ireland will not be a land to live in; at least, if we do live there, we must import all our murders, that's clear." Toad-in-the-hole sat down, growling with suppressed wrath; and the uproarious "Hear, hear!" clamorously expressed the general concurrence.

The next toast was—"The sublime epoch of Burkism and Harism!"

This was drunk with enthusiasm; and one of the members, who spoke to the question, made a very curious communication to the company:—"Gentlemen, we fancy Burkism to be a pure invention of our own times: and in fact no Pancirollus has ever enumerated this branch of art when writing *de rebus deperditis*. Still, I have ascertained that the essential principle of this variety in the art *was* known to the ancients; although, like the art of painting upon glass, of making the myrrhine cups, etc., it was lost in the dark ages for want of encouragement. In the famous collection of Greek epigrams made by Planudes, is one upon a very fascinating case of Burkism: it is a perfect little gem of art. The epigram itself I cannot lay my hand upon at this moment; but the following is an abstract of it by Salmasius, as I find it in his notes on Vopiscus: 'Est et elegans epigramma Lucilii, ubi medicus et pollinctor de compacto sic egerunt, ut medicus ægros omnes curæ suæ commissos occideret: this was the basis of the contract, you see, that on the one part the doctor, for himself and his assigns, doth undertake and contract duly and truly to murder all the patients committed to his charge: but why? There lies the beauty of the case—Et ut pollinctori amico suo traderet pollingendos.' The *pollinctor*, you are aware, was a person whose business it was to dress and prepare dead bodies for burial. The original ground of the transaction appears to have been sentimental: 'He was my friend,' says the murderous doctor; 'he was dear to me,' in speaking of the pollinctor. But the law, gentlemen, is stern and harsh: the law will not hear of these tender motives: to sustain a contract of this nature in law, it is essential that a 'consideration' should be given. Now what *was* the consideration? For thus far all is on the side of the pollinctor: he will be well paid for his services; but, meantime, the generous, the noble-minded doctor gets nothing. What *was* the equivalent,

again I ask, which the law would insist on the doctor's taking, in order to establish that 'consideration,' without which the contract had no force? You shall hear: 'Et ut pollinctor vicissim τελαμῶνας quos furabatur de pollinctione mortuorum medico mitteret donis ad alliganda vulnera eorum quos curabat;' *i.e.*, and that reciprocally the pollinctor should transmit to the physician, as free gifts for the binding up of wounds in those whom he treated medically, the belts or trusses (τελαμῶνας) which he had succeeded in purloining in the course of his functions about the corpses.

"Now, the case is clear: the whole went on a principle of reciprocity which would have kept up the trade for ever. The doctor was also a surgeon: he could not murder *all* his patients: some of the patients must be retained intact. For these he wanted linen bandages. But, unhappily, the Romans wore woollen, on which account it was that they bathed so often. Meantime, there *was* linen to be had in Rome; but it was monstrously dear; and the τελαμῶνες, or linen swathing bandages, in which superstition obliged them to bind up corpses, would answer capitally for the surgeon. The doctor, therefore, contracts to furnish his friend with a constant succession of corpses, provided, and be it understood always, that his said friend, in return, should supply him with one-half of the articles he would receive from the friends of the parties murdered or to be murdered. The doctor invariably recommended his invaluable friend the pollinctor (whom let us call the undertaker); the undertaker, with equal regard to the sacred rights of friendship, uniformly recommended the doctor. Like Pylades and Orestes, they were models of a perfect friendship: in their lives they were lovely: and on the gallows, it is to be hoped, they were not divided.

"Gentlemen, it makes me laugh horribly, when I think of those two friends drawing and re-drawing on each other: 'Pollinctor in account with Doctor, debtor by sixteen corpses: creditor by forty-five bandages, two of which damaged.' Their names unfortunately are lost; but I conceive they must have been Quintus Burkius and Publius Harius. By the way, gentlemen, has anybody heard lately of Hare? I understand he is comfortably settled in Ireland, considerably to the west, and does a little business now and then; but, as he observes with a sigh, only as a retailer—nothing like the fine thriving wholesale concern so carelessly blown up at Edinburgh. 'You see what comes of neglecting business'—is the chief moral, the

ἐπιμύθιον, as Æsop would say, which Hare draws from his past experience."

At length came the toast of the day—*Thugdom in all its branches.*

The speeches *attempted* at this crisis of the dinner were past all counting. But the applause was so furious, the music so stormy, and the crashing of glasses so incessant, from the general resolution never again to drink an inferior toast from the same glass, that I am unequal to the task of reporting. Besides which, Toad-in-the-hole now became ungovernable. He kept firing pistols in every direction; sent his servant for a blunderbuss, and talked of loading with ball-cartridge. We conceived that his former madness had returned at the mention of Burke and Hare; or that, being again weary of life, he had resolved to go off in a general massacre. This we could not think of allowing; it became indispensable, therefore, to kick him out; which we did with universal consent, the whole company lending their toes *uno pede,* as I may say, though pitying his grey hairs and his angelic smile. During the operation, the orchestra poured in their old chorus. The universal company sang, and (what surprised us most of all) Toad-in-the-hole joined us furiously in singing—

"Et interrogatum est ab omnibus—Ubi est ille Toad-in-the-hole?
Et responsum est ab omnibus—Non est inventus."

POSTSCRIPT

It is impossible to conciliate readers of so saturnine and gloomy a class, that they cannot enter with genial sympathy into any gaiety whatever, but, least of all, when the gaiety trespasses a little into the province of the extragavant. In such a case, not to sympathise is not to understand; and the playfulness, which is not relished, becomes flat and insipid, or absolutely without meaning. Fortunately, after all such churls have withdrawn from my audience in high displeasure, there remains a large majority who are loud in acknowledging the amusement which they have derived from this little paper; at the same time proving the sincerity of their praise by one hesitating expression of censure. Repeatedly they have suggested to me, that perhaps the extravagance, though clearly intentional, and forming

one element in the general gaiety of the conception, went too far. I am not myself of that opinion; and I beg to remind these friendly censors, that it is amongst the direct purposes and efforts of this *bagatelle* to graze the brink of horror, and of all that would in actual realisation be most repulsive. The very excess of the extravagance, in fact, by suggesting to the reader continually the mere aeriality of the entire speculation, furnishes the surest means of disenchanting him from the horror which might else gather upon his feelings. Let me remind such objectors, once for all, of Dean Swift's proposal for turning to account the supernumerary infants of the three kingdoms, which, in those days, both at Dublin and at London, were provided for in foundling hospitals, by cooking and eating them. This was an extravaganza, though really bolder and more coarsely practical than mine, which did not provoke any reproaches even to a dignitary of the supreme Irish church; its own monstrosity was its excuse; mere extravagance was felt to license and accredit the little *jeu d'esprit*, precisely as the blank impossibilities of Lilliput, of Laputa, of the Yahoos, etc., had licensed those. If, therefore, any man thinks it worth his while to tilt against so mere a foam-bubble of gaiety as this lecture on the æsthetics of murder, I shelter myself for the moment under the Telamonian shield of the dean. But, in reality, which (to say the truth) formed one motive for detaining the reader by this postscript, my own little paper may plead a privileged excuse for its extravagance, such as is altogether wanting to the dean's. Nobody can pretend, for a moment, on behalf of the dean, that there is any ordinary and natural tendency in human thoughts, which could ever turn to infants as articles of diet; under any conceivable circumstances, this would be felt as the most aggravated form of cannibalism—cannibalism applying itself to the most defenceless part of the species. But, on the other hand, the tendency to a critical or æsthetic valuation of fires and murders is universal. If you are summoned to the spectacle of a great fire, undoubtedly the first impulse is—to assist in putting it out. But that field of exertion is very limited, and is soon filled by regular professional people, trained and equipped for the service. In the case of a fire which is operating upon *private* property, pity for a neighbour's calamity checks us at first in treating the affair as a scenic spectacle. But perhaps the fire may be confined to public buildings. And in any case, after we have paid our tribute of regret to the affair, considered as a calamity, inevitably, and

without restraint, we go on to consider it as a stage spectacle. Exclamations of—How grand! how magnificent! arise in a sort of rapture from the crowd. For instance, when Drury Lane was burned down in the first decennium of this century, the falling in of the roof was signalised by a mimic suicide of the protecting Apollo that surmounted and crested the centre of this roof. The god was stationary with his lyre, and seemed looking down upon the fiery ruins that were so rapidly approaching him. Suddenly the supporting timbers below him gave way; a convulsive heave of the billowing flames seemed for a moment to raise the statue; and then, as if on some impulse of despair, the presiding deity appeared not to fall, but to throw himself into the fiery deluge, for he went down head foremost; and in all respects, the descent had the air of a voluntary act. What followed? From every one of the bridges over the river, and from other open areas which commanded the spectacle, there arose a sustained uproar of admiration and sympathy. Some few years before this event, a prodigious fire occurred at Liverpool; the *Goree*, a vast pile of warehouses close to one of the docks, was burned to the ground. The huge edifice, eight or nine storeys high, and laden with most combustible goods, many thousand bales of cotton, wheat and oats in thousands of quarters, tar, turpentine, rum, gunpowder, etc., continued through many hours of darkness to feed this tremendous fire. To aggravate the calamity, it blew a regular gale of wind; luckily for the shipping, it blew inland, that is, to the east; and all the way down to Warrington, eighteen miles distant to the eastward, the whole air was illuminated by flakes of cotton, often saturated with rum, and by what seemed absolute worlds of blazing sparks, that lighted up all the upper chambers of the air. All the cattle lying abroad in the fields through a breadth of eighteen miles, were thrown into terror and agitation. Men, of course, read in this hurrying overhead of scintillating and blazing vortices, the annunciation of some gigantic calamity going on in Liverpool; and the lamentation on that account was universal. But that mood of public sympathy did not at all interfere to suppress or even to check the momentary bursts of rapturous admiration, as this arrowy sleet of many-coloured fire rode on the wings of hurricane, alternately through open depths of air, or through dark clouds overhead.

Precisely the same treatment is applied to murders. After the first tribute of sorrow to those who have perished, but, at all events, after the personal interests have been tranquillised

by time, inevitably the scenical features (what æsthetically may be called the comparative *advantages*) of the several murders are reviewed and valued. One murder is compared with another; and the circumstances of superiority, as, for example, in the incidence and effects of surprise, of mystery, etc., are collated and appraised. I, therefore, for *my* extravagance, claim an inevitable and perpetual ground in the spontaneous tendencies of the human mind when left to itself. But no one will pretend that any corresponding plea can be advanced on behalf of Swift.

In this important distinction between myself and the dean, lies one reason which prompted the present postscript. A second purpose of the postscript is, to make the reader acquainted circumstantially with three memorable cases of murder, which long ago the voice of amateurs has crowned with laurel, but especially with the two earliest of the three, viz., the immortal Williams' murders of 1812. The act and the actor are each separately in the highest degree interesting; and, as forty-two years have elapsed since 1812, it cannot be supposed that either is known circumstantially to the men of the current generation.

Never, throughout the annals of universal Christendom, has there indeed been any act of one solitary insulated individual, armed with power so appalling over the hearts of men, as that exterminating murder, by which, during the winter of 1812, John Williams, in one hour, smote two houses with emptiness, exterminated all but two entire households, and asserted his own supremacy above all the children of Cain. It would be absolutely impossible adequately to describe the frenzy of feelings which, throughout the next fortnight, mastered the popular heart; the mere delirium of indignant horror in some, the mere delirium of panic in others. For twelve succeeding days, under some groundless notion that the unknown murderer had quitted London, the panic which had convulsed the mighty metropolis diffused itself all over the island. I was myself at that time nearly three hundred miles from London; but there, and everywhere, the panic was indescribable. One lady, my next neighbour, whom personally I knew, living at the moment, during the absence of her husband, with a few servants in a very solitary house, never rested until she had placed eighteen doors (so she told me, and, indeed, satisfied me by ocular proof), each secured by ponderous bolts, and bars, and chains, between her own bedroom and any intruder of human build. To reach her, even in her drawing-room, was like going, as a flag of truce, into

a beleaguered fortress; at every sixth step one was stopped by a sort of portcullis. The panic was not confined to the rich; women in the humblest ranks more than once died upon the spot, from the shock attending some suspicious attempts at intrusion upon the part of vagrants, meditating probably nothing worse than a robbery, but whom the poor women, misled by the London newspapers, had fancied to be the dreadful London murderer. Meantime, this solitary artist, that rested in the centre of London, self-supported by his own conscious grandeur, as a domestic Attila, or " scourge of God; " this man, that walked in darkness, and relied upon murder (as afterwards transpired) for bread, for clothes, for promotion in life, was silently preparing an effectual answer to the public journals; and on the twelfth day after his inaugural murder, he advertised his presence in London, and published to all men the absurdity of ascribing to *him* any ruralising propensities, by striking a second blow, and accomplishing a second family extermination. Somewhat lightened was the *provincial* panic by this proof that the murderer had not condescended to sneak into the country, or to abandon for a moment, under any motive of caution or fear, the great metropolitan *castra stativa* of gigantic crime, seated for ever on the Thames. In fact, the great artist disdained a provincial reputation; and he must have felt, as a case of ludicrous disproportion, the contrast between a country town or village, on the one hand, and, on the other, a work more lasting than brass—a κτημα ἐς αει—a murder such in quality as any murder that *he* would condescend to own for a work turned out from his own *studio*.

Coleridge, whom I saw some months after these terrific murders, told me, that, for *his* part, though at the time resident in London, he had not shared in the prevailing panic; *him* they affected only as a philosopher, and threw him into a profound reverie upon the tremendous power which is laid open in a moment to any man who can reconcile himself to the abjuration of all conscientious restraints, if, at the same time, thoroughly without fear. Not sharing in the public panic, however, Coleridge did not consider that panic at all unreasonable; for, as he said most truly, in that vast metropolis there are many thousands of households, composed exclusively of women and children; many other thousands there are who necessarily confide their safety, in the long evenings, to the discretion of a young servant girl; and if she suffers herself to be beguiled by the pretence of a message from her mother, sister, or sweetheart, into opening

the door, there, in one second of time, goes to wreck the security of the house. However, at that time, and for many months afterwards, the practice of steadily putting the chain upon the door before it was opened prevailed generally, and for a long time served as a record of that deep impression left upon London by Mr. Williams. Southey, I may add, entered deeply into the public feeling on this occasion, and said to me, within a week or two of the first murder, that it was a private event of that order which rose to the dignity of a national event.[1] But now, having prepared the reader to appreciate on its true scale this dreadful tissue of murder (which, as a record belonging to an era that is now left forty-two years behind us, not one person in four of this generation can be expected to know correctly), let me pass to the circumstantial details of the affair.

Yet, first of all, one word as to the local scene of the murders. Ratcliffe Highway is a public thoroughfare in a most chaotic quarter of eastern or nautical London; and at this time (viz., in 1812), when no adequate police existed except the *detective* police of Bow Street, admirable for its own peculiar purposes, but utterly incommensurate to the general service of the capital, it was a most dangerous quarter. Every third man at the least might be set down as a foreigner. Lascars, Chinese, Moors, Negroes, were met at every step. And apart from the manifold ruffianism, shrouded impenetrably under the mixed hats and turbans of men whose past was untraceable to any European eye, it is well known that the navy (especially, in time of war, the commercial navy) of Christendom is the sure receptacle of all the murderers and ruffians whose crimes have given them a motive for withdrawing themselves for a season from the public eye. It is true, that few of this class are qualified to act as "able" seamen: but at all times, and especially during war, only a small proportion (or *nucleus*) of each ship's company consists of such men: the large majority being mere untutored landsmen. John Williams, however, who had been occasionally rated as a seaman on board of various Indiamen, etc., was probably a very accomplished seaman. Pretty generally, in fact, he was a ready and adroit man, fertile in resources under all sudden difficulties, and most flexibly adapting himself to all varieties of social life. Williams was a man of middle stature (five feet seven and a-half, to five feet eight inches high), slenderly

[1] I am not sure whether Southey held at this time his appointment to the editorship of the *Edinburgh Annual Register*. If he did, no doubt in the domestic section of that chronicle will be found an excellent account of the whole.

built, rather thin, but wiry, tolerably muscular, and clear of all superfluous flesh. A lady, who saw him under examination (I think at the Thames Police Office), assured me that his hair was of the most extraordinary and vivid colour, viz., bright yellow, something between an orange and a lemon colour. Williams had been in India; chiefly in Bengal and Madras; but he had also been upon the Indus. Now, it is notorious that, in the Punjaub, horses of a high caste are often painted—crimson, blue, green, purple; and it struck me that Williams might, for some casual purpose of disguise, have taken a hint from this practice of Scinde and Lahore, so that the colour might not have been natural. In other respects, his appearance was natural enough; and, judging by a plaster cast of him, which I purchased in London, I should say mean, as regarded his facial structure. One fact, however, was striking, and fell in with the impression of his natural tiger character, that his face wore at all times a bloodless ghastly pallor. "You might imagine," said my informant, "that in his veins circulated not red life-blood, such as could kindle into the blush of shame, of wrath, of pity—but a green sap that welled from no human heart." His eyes seemed frozen and glazed, as if their light were all converged upon some victim lurking in the far background. So far his appearance might have repelled; but, on the other hand, the concurrent testimony of many witnesses, and also the silent testimony of facts, showed that the oiliness and snaky insinuation of his demeanour counteracted the repulsiveness of his ghastly face, and amongst inexperienced young women won for him a very favourable reception. In particular, one gentle-mannered girl, whom Williams had undoubtedly designed to murder, gave in evidence —that once, when sitting alone with her, he had said, "Now, Miss R., supposing that I should appear about midnight at your bedside, armed with a carving knife, what would you say?" To which the confiding girl had replied, "Oh, Mr. Williams, if it was anybody else, I should be frightened. But, as soon as I heard *your* voice, I should be tranquil." Poor girl; had this outline sketch of Mr. Williams been filled in and realised, she would have seen something in the corpse-like face, and heard something in the sinister voice, that would have unsettled her tranquillity for ever. But nothing short of such dreadful experiences could avail to unmask Mr. John Williams.

Into this perilous region it was that, on a Saturday night in December, Mr. Williams, whom we must suppose to have long since made his *coup d'essai*, forced his way through the crowded

streets, bound on business. To say was to do. And this night he had said to himself secretly, that he would execute a design which he had already sketched, and which, when finished, was destined on the following day to strike consternation into "all that mighty heart" of London, from centre to circumference. It was afterwards remembered that he had quitted his lodgings on this dark errand about eleven o'clock p.m.; not that he meant to begin so soon: but he needed to reconnoitre. He carried his tools closely buttoned up under his loose roomy coat. It was in harmony with the general subtlety of his character, and his polished hatred of brutality, that by universal agreement his manners were distinguished for exquisite suavity: the tiger's heart was masked by the most insinuating and snaky refinement. All his acquaintances afterwards described his dissimulation as so ready and so perfect, that if, in making his way through the streets, always so crowded on a Saturday night in neighbourhoods so poor, he had accidentally jostled any person, he would (as they were all satisfied) have stopped to offer the most gentlemanly apologies: with his devilish heart brooding over the most hellish of purposes, he would yet have paused to express a benign hope that the huge mallet, buttoned up under his elegant surtout, with a view to the little business that awaited him about ninety minutes further on, had not inflicted any pain on the stranger with whom he had come into collision. Titian, I believe, but certainly Rubens, and perhaps Vandyke, made it a rule never to practise his art but in full dress—point ruffles, bag wig, and diamond-hilted sword: and Mr. Williams, there is reason to believe, when he went out for a grand compound massacre (in another sense, one might have applied to it the Oxford phrase of *going out as Grand Compounder*), always assumed black silk stockings and pumps; nor would he on any account have degraded his position as an artist by wearing a morning gown. In his second great performance, it was particularly noticed and recorded by the one sole trembling man, who under killing agonies of fear was compelled (as the reader will find) from a secret stand to become the solitary spectator of his atrocities, that Mr. Williams wore a long blue frock, of the very finest cloth, and richly lined with silk. Amongst the anecdotes which circulated about him, it was also said at the time, that Mr. Williams employed the first of dentists, and also the first of chiropodists. On no account would he patronise any second-rate skill. And beyond a doubt, in that perilous little branch of business which was practised by himself, he

might be regarded as the most aristocratic and fastidious of artists.

But who meantime was the victim, to whose abode he was hurrying? For surely he never could be so indiscreet as to be sailing about on a roving cruise in search of some chance person to murder? Oh, no: he had suited himself with a victim some time before, viz., an old and very intimate friend. For he seems to have laid it down as a maxim—that the best person to murder was a friend; and, in default of a friend, which is an article one cannot always command, an acquaintance: because, in either case, on first approaching his subject, suspicion would be disarmed: whereas a stranger might take alarm, and find in the very countenance of his murderer elect a warning summons to place himself on guard. However, in the present case, his destined victim was supposed to unite both characters: originally he had been a friend; but subsequently, on good cause arising, he had become an enemy. Or more probably, as others said, the feelings had long since languished which gave life to either relation of friendship or of enmity. Marr was the name of that unhappy man who (whether in the character of friend or enemy) had been selected for the subject of this present Saturday night's performance. And the story current at that time about the connection between Williams and Marr, having (whether true or not true) never been contradicted upon authority, was, that they sailed in the same Indiaman to Calcutta; that they had quarrelled when at sea; but another version of the story said—no: they had quarrelled after returning from sea; and the subject of their quarrel was Mrs. Marr, a very pretty young woman, for whose favour they had been rival candidates, and at one time with most bitter enmity towards each other. Some circumstances give a colour of probability to this story. Otherwise it has sometimes happened, on occasion of a murder not sufficiently accounted for, that, from pure goodness of heart intolerant of a mere sordid motive for a striking murder, some person has forged, and the public has accredited, a story representing the murderer as having moved under some loftier excitement: and in this case the public, too much shocked at the idea of Williams having on the single motive of gain consummated so complex a tragedy, welcomed the tale which represented him as governed by deadly malice, growing out of the more impassioned and noble rivalry for the favour of a woman. The case remains in some degree doubtful; but, certainly, the probability is, that Mrs. Marr had been the

true cause, the *causa teterrima*, of the feud between the men. Meantime the minutes are numbered, the sands of the hour-glass are running out, that measure the duration of this feud upon earth. This night it shall cease. To-morrow is the day which in England they call Sunday, which in Scotland they call by the Judaic name of "Sabbath." To both nations, under different names, the day has the same functions; to both it is a day of rest. For thee also, Marr, it shall be a day of rest, so is it written; thou, too, young Marr, shalt find rest—thou; and thy household, and the stranger that is within thy gates. But that rest must be in the world which lies beyond the grave. On this side the grave ye have all slept your final sleep.

The night was one of exceeding darkness; and in this humble quarter of London, whatever the night happened to be, light or dark, quiet or stormy, all shops were kept open on Saturday nights until twelve o'clock, at the least, and many for half an hour longer. There was no rigorous and pedantic Jewish superstition about the exact limits of Sunday. At the very worst, the Sunday stretched over from one o'clock a.m. of one day, up to eight o'clock a.m. of the next, making a clear circuit of thirty-one hours. This, surely, was long enough. Marr, on this particular Saturday night, would be content if it were even shorter, provided it would come more quickly, for he has been toiling through sixteen hours behind his counter. Marr's position in life was this: he kept a little hosier's shop, and had invested in his stock and the fittings of his shop about £180. Like all men engaged in trade, he suffered some anxieties. He was a new beginner; but, already, bad debts had alarmed him; and bills were coming to maturity that were not likely to be met by commensurate sales. Yet, constitutionally, he was a sanguine hoper. At this time he was a stout, fresh-coloured young man of twenty-seven; in some slight degree uneasy from his commercial prospects; but still cheerful, and anticipating—(how vainly!)—that for this night, and the next night, at least, he will rest his wearied head and his cares upon the faithful bosom of his sweet lovely young wife. The household of Marr, consisting of five persons, is as follows: First, there is himself, who, if he should happen to be ruined, in a limited commercial sense, has energy enough to jump up again, like a pyramid of fire, and soar high above ruin many times repeated. Yes, poor Marr, so it might be, if thou wert left to thy native energies unmolested; but even now there stands on the other side of the street one born of hell, who puts his peremptory negative on all these flattering prospects.

Second in the list of this household stands his pretty and amiable wife, who is happy after the fashion of youthful wives, for she is only twenty-two, and anxious (if at all) only on account of her darling infant. For, thirdly, there is in a cradle, not quite nine feet below the street, viz., in a warm, cosy kitchen, and rocked at intervals by the young mother, a baby eight months old. Nineteen months have Marr and herself been married; and this is their first-born child. Grieve not for this child, that it must keep the deep rest of Sunday in some other world; for wherefore should an orphan, steeped to the lips in poverty, when once bereaved of father and mother, linger upon an alien and a murderous earth? Fourthly, there is a stoutish boy, an apprentice, say thirteen years old; a Devonshire boy, with handsome features, such as most Devonshire youths have;[1] satisfied with his place; not overworked; treated kindly, and aware that he was treated kindly, by his master and mistress. Fifthly, and lastly, bringing up the rear of this quiet household, is a servant girl, a grown-up young woman; and she, being particularly kind-hearted, occupied (as often happens in families of humble pretensions as to rank) a sort of sisterly place in her relation to her mistress. A great democratic change is at this very time (1854), and has been for twenty years, passing over British society. Multitudes of persons are becoming ashamed of saying, "my master," or "my mistress:" the term now in the slow process of superseding it is, "my employer." Now, in the United States, such an expression of democratic hauteur, though disagreeable as a needless proclamation of independence which nobody is disputing, leaves, however, no lasting bad effect. For the domestic "helps" are pretty generally in a state of transition so sure and so rapid to the headship of domestic establishments, belonging to themselves, that in effect they are but ignoring, for the present moment, a relation which would at any rate dissolve itself in a year or two. But in England, where no such resources exist of everlasting surplus lands, the tendency of the change is painful. It carries with it a sullen and a coarse expression of immunity from a yoke which was in any case a light one, and often a benign one. In some other place, I will illustrate my meaning. Here, apparently, in Mrs. Marr's service, the principle concerned illustrated itself practically. Mary,

[1] An artist told me in this year, 1812, that having accidentally seen a native Devonshire regiment (either volunteers or militia), nine hundred strong, marching past a station at which he had posted himself, he did not observe a dozen men that would not have been described in common parlance as "good-looking."

the female servant, felt a sincere and unaffected respect for a mistress whom she saw so steadily occupied with her domestic duties, and who, though so young, and invested with some slight authority, never exerted it capriciously, or even showed it at all conspicuously. According to the testimony of all the neighbours, she treated her mistress with a shade of unobtrusive respect on the one hand, and yet was eager to relieve her, whenever that was possible, from the weight of her maternal duties, with the cheerful voluntary service of a sister.

To this young woman it was, that, suddenly, within three or four minutes of midnight, Marr called aloud from the head of the stairs—directing her to go out and purchase some oysters for the family supper. Upon what slender accidents hang oftentimes solemn life-long results! Marr occupied in the concerns of his shop, Mrs. Marr occupied with some little ailment and restlessness of her baby, had both forgotten the affair of supper; the time was now narrowing every moment, as regarded any variety of choice; and oysters were perhaps ordered as the likeliest article to be had at all, after twelve o'clock should have struck. And yet, upon this trivial circumstance depended Mary's life. Had she been sent abroad for supper at the ordinary time of ten or eleven o'clock, it is almost certain that she, the solitary member of the household who escaped from the exterminating tragedy, would *not* have escaped; too surely she would have shared the general fate. It had now become necessary to be quick. Hastily, therefore, receiving money from Marr, with a basket in her hand, but unbonneted, Mary tripped out of the shop. It became afterwards, on recollection, a heart-chilling remembrance to herself—that, precisely as she emerged from the shop-door, she noticed on the opposite side of the street, by the light of the lamps, a man's figure; stationary at the instant, but in the next instant slowly moving. This was Williams; as a little incident, either just before or just after (at present it is impossible to say which), sufficiently proved. Now, when one considers the inevitable hurry and trepidation of Mary under the circumstances stated, time barely sufficing for any chance of executing her errand, it becomes evident that she must have connected some deep feeling of mysterious uneasiness with the movements of this unknown man; else, assuredly, she would not have found her attention disposable for such a case. Thus far, she herself threw some little light upon what it might be that, semi-consciously, was then passing through her mind; she said that, notwithstanding the darkness,

which would not permit her to trace the man's features, or to ascertain the exact direction of his eyes, it yet struck her, that from his carriage when in motion, and from the apparent inclination of his person, he must be looking at No. 29. The little incident which I have alluded to as confirming Mary's belief was, that, at some period not very far from midnight, the watchman had specially noticed this stranger; he had observed him continually peeping into the window of Marr's shop; and had thought this act, connected with the man's appearance, so suspicious, that he stepped into Marr's shop, and communicated what he had seen. This fact he afterwards stated before the magistrates; and he added, that subsequently, viz., a few minutes after twelve (eight or ten minutes, probably, after the departure of Mary), he (the watchman), when re-entering upon his ordinary half-hourly beat, was requested by Marr to assist him in closing the shutters. Here they had a final communication with each other; and the watchman mentioned to Marr that the mysterious stranger had now apparently taken himself off; for that he had not been visible since the first communication made to Marr by the watchman. There is little doubt that Williams had observed the watchman's visit to Marr, and had thus had his attention seasonably drawn to the indiscretion of his own demeanour; so that the warning, given unavailingly to Marr, had been turned to account by Williams. There can be still less doubt, that the bloodhound had commenced his work within one minute of the watchman's assisting Marr to put up his shutters. And on the following consideration:—that which prevented Williams from commencing even earlier, was the exposure of the shop's whole interior to the gaze of street passengers. It was indispensable that the shutters should be accurately closed before Williams could safely get to work. But, as soon as ever this preliminary precaution had been completed, once having secured that concealment from the public eye, it then became of still greater importance not to lose a moment by delay, than previously it had been not to hazard anything by precipitance. For all depended upon going in before Marr should have locked the door. On any other mode of effecting an entrance (as, for instance, by waiting for the return of Mary, and making his entrance simultaneously with her), it will be seen that Williams must have forfeited that particular advantage which mute facts, when read into their true construction, will soon show the reader that he must have employed. Williams waited, of necessity, for the sound of the watchman's retreating

steps; waited, perhaps, for thirty seconds; but when that danger was past, the next danger was, lest Marr should lock the door; one turn of the key, and the murderer would have been locked out. In, therefore, he bolted, and by a dexterous movement of his left hand, no doubt, turned the key, without letting Marr perceive this fatal stratagem. It is really wonderful and most interesting to pursue the successive steps of this monster, and to notice the absolute certainty with which the silent hieroglyphics of the case betray to us the whole process and movements of the bloody drama, not less surely and fully than if we had been ourselves hidden in Marr's shop, or had looked down from the heavens of mercy upon this hell-kite, that knew not what mercy meant. That he had concealed from Marr his trick, secret and rapid, upon the lock, is evident; because else, Marr would instantly have taken the alarm, especially after what the watchman had communicated. But it will soon be seen that Marr had *not* been alarmed. In reality, towards the full success of Williams, it was important, in the last degree, to intercept and forestall any yell or shout of agony from Marr. Such an outcry, and in a situation so slenderly fenced off from the street, viz., by walls the very thinnest, makes itself heard outside pretty nearly as well as if it were uttered in the street. Such an outcry it was indispensable to stifle. It *was* stifled; and the reader will soon understand *how*. Meantime, at this point, let us leave the murderer alone with his victims. For fifty minutes let him work his pleasure. The front-door, as we know, is now fastened against all help. Help there is none. Let us, therefore, in vision, attach ourselves to Mary; and, when all is over, let us come back with *her*, again raise the curtain, and read the dreadful record of all that has passed in her absence.

The poor girl, uneasy in her mind to an extent that she could but half understand, roamed up and down in search of an oyster shop; and finding none that was still open, within any circuit that her ordinary experience had made her acquainted with, she fancied it best to try the chances of some remoter district. Lights she saw gleaming or twinkling at a distance, that still tempted her onwards; and thus, amongst unknown streets poorly lighted,[1] and on a night of peculiar darkness, and in a region of London where ferocious tumults were continually turn-

[1] I do not remember, chronologically, the history of gas-lights. But in London, long after Mr. Winsor had shown the value of gas-lighting, and its applicability to street purposes, various districts were prevented, for many years, from resorting to the new system, in consequence of old contracts with oil dealers, subsisting through long terms of years.

ing her out of what seemed to be the direct course, naturally she got bewildered. The purpose with which she started had by this time become hopeless. Nothing remained for her now but to retrace her steps. But this was difficult; for she was afraid to ask directions from chance passengers, whose appearance the darkness prevented her from reconnoitring. At length by his lantern she recognised a watchman; through him she was guided into the right road; and in ten minutes more, she found herself back at the door of No. 29, in Ratcliffe Highway. But by this time she felt satisfied that she must have been absent for fifty or sixty minutes; indeed, she had heard, at a distance, the cry of *past one o'clock*, which, commencing a few seconds after one, lasted intermittingly for ten or thirteen minutes.

In the tumult of agonising thoughts that very soon surprised her, naturally it became hard for her to recall distinctly the whole succession of doubts, and jealousies, and shadowy misgivings that soon opened upon her. But, so far as could be collected, she had not in the first moment of reaching home noticed anything decisively alarming. In very many cities bells are the main instruments for communicating between the street and the interior of houses: but in London knockers prevail. At Marr's there was both a knocker and a bell. Mary rang, and at the same time very gently knocked. She had no fear of disturbing her master or mistress; *them* she made sure of finding still up. Her anxiety was for the baby, who being disturbed might again rob her mistress of a night's rest. And she well knew that, with three people all anxiously awaiting her return, and by this time, perhaps, seriously uneasy at her delay, the least audible whisper from herself would in a moment bring one of them to the door. Yet how is this? To her astonishment, but with the astonishment came creeping over her an icy horror, no stir nor murmur was heard ascending from the kitchen. At this moment came back upon her, with shuddering anguish, the indistinct image of the stranger in the loose dark coat, whom she had seen stealing along under the shadowy lamp-light, and too certainly watching her master's motions: keenly she now reproached herself that, under whatever stress of hurry, she had not acquainted Mr. Marr with the suspicious appearances. Poor girl! she did not then know that, if this communication could have availed to put Marr upon his guard, it had reached him from another quarter; so that her own omission, which had in reality arisen under her hurry to execute her master's commission, could not be charged with any bad consequences. But all such

reflections this way or that were swallowed up at this point in overmastering panic. That her double summons *could* have been unnoticed—this solitary fact in one moment made a revelation of horror. One person might have fallen asleep, but two—but three—*that* was a mere impossibility. And even supposing all three together with the baby locked in sleep, still how unaccountable was this utter—utter silence! Most naturally at this moment something like hysterical horror over-shadowed the poor girl, and now at last she rang the bell with the violence that belongs to sickening terror. This done, she paused: self-command enough she still retained, though fast and fast it was slipping away from her, to bethink herself—that, if any overwhelming accident *had* compelled both Marr and his apprentice-boy to leave the house in order to summon surgical aid from opposite quarters—a thing barely supposable—still, even in that case Mrs. Marr and her infant would be left; and some murmuring reply, under any extremity, would be elicited from the poor mother. To pause, therefore, to impose stern silence upon herself, so as to leave room for the possible answer to this final appeal, became a duty of spasmodic effort. Listen, therefore, poor trembling heart; listen, and for twenty seconds be still as death. Still as death she was; and during that dread-ful stillness, when she hushed her breath that she might listen, occurred an incident of killing fear, that to her dying day would never cease to renew its echoes in her ear. She, Mary, the poor trembling girl, checking and overruling herself by a final effort, that she might leave full opening for her dear young mistress's answer to her own last frantic appeal, heard at last and most distinctly a sound within the house. Yes, now beyond a doubt there is coming an answer to her summons. What was it? On the stairs, not the stairs that led downwards to the kitchen, but the stairs that led upwards to the single storey of bed-chambers above, was heard a creaking sound. Next was heard most distinctly a footfall: one, two, three, four, five stairs were slowly and distinctly descended. Then the dreadful footsteps were heard advancing along the little narrow passage to the door. The steps—oh heavens! *whose* steps?—have paused at the door. The very breathing can be heard of that dreadful being, who has silenced all breathing except his own in the house. There is but a door between him and Mary. What is he doing on the other side of the door? A cautious step, a stealthy step it was that came down the stairs, then paced along the little narrow passage—narrow as a coffin—till at last the

step pauses at the door. How hard the fellow breathes! He, the solitary murderer, is on one side the door; Mary is on the other side. Now, suppose that he should suddenly open the door, and that incautiously in the dark Mary should rush in, and find herself in the arms of the murderer. Thus far the case is a possible one—that to a certainty, had this little trick been tried immediately upon Mary's return, it would have succeeded; had the door been opened suddenly upon her first tingle-tingle, headlong she would have tumbled in, and perished. But now Mary is upon her guard. The unknown murderer and she have both their lips upon the door, listening, breathing hard; but luckily they are on different sides of the door; and upon the least indication of unlocking or unlatching, she would have recoiled into the asylum of general darkness.

What was the murderer's meaning in coming along the passage to the front door? The meaning was this: separately, as an individual, Mary was worth nothing at all to him. But, considered as a member of a household, she had this value, viz., that she, if caught and murdered, perfected and rounded the desolation of the house. The case being reported, as reported it would be all over Christendom, led the imagination captive. The whole covey of victims was thus netted; the household ruin was thus full and orbicular; and in that proportion the tendency of men and women, flutter as they might, would be helplessly and hopelessly to sink into the all-conquering hands of the mighty murderer. He had but to say—my testimonials are dated from No. 29 Ratcliffe Highway, and the poor vanquished imagination sank powerless before the fascinating rattlesnake eye of the murderer. There is not a doubt that the motive of the murderer for standing on the inner side of Marr's front door, whilst Mary stood on the outside, was—a hope that, if he quietly opened the door, whisperingly counterfeiting Marr's voice, and saying, What made you stay so long? possibly she might have been inveigled. He was wrong; the time was past for that; Mary was now maniacally awake; she began now to ring the bell and to ply the knocker with unintermitting violence. And the natural consequence was, that the next door neighbour, who had recently gone to bed and instantly fallen asleep, was roused; and by the incessant violence of the ringing and the knocking, which now obeyed a delirious and uncontrollable impulse in Mary, he became sensible that some very dreadful event must be at the root of so clamorous an uproar. To rise, to throw up the sash, to demand angrily the cause of this unseasonable

tumult, was the work of a moment. The poor girl remained sufficiently mistress of herself rapidly to explain the circumstance of her own absence for an hour; her belief that Mr. and Mrs. Marr's family had all been murdered in the interval; and that at this very moment the murderer was in the house.

The person to whom she addressed this statement was a pawnbroker; and a thoroughly brave man he must have been; for it was a perilous undertaking, merely as a trial of physical strength, singly to face a mysterious assassin, who had apparently signalised his prowess by a triumph so comprehensive. But, again, for the imagination it required an effort of self-conquest to rush headlong into the presence of one invested with a cloud of mystery, whose nation, age, motives, were all alike unknown. Rarely on any field of battle has a soldier been called upon to face so complex a danger. For if the entire family of his neighbour Marr had been exterminated, were this indeed true, such a scale of bloodshed would seem to argue that there must have been two persons as the perpetrators; or if one singly had accomplished such a ruin, in that case how colossal must have been his audacity! probably, also, his skill and animal power! Moreover, the unknown enemy (whether single or double) would, doubtless, be elaborately armed. Yet, under all these disadvantages, did this fearless man rush at once to the field of butchery in his neighbour's house. Waiting only to draw on his trousers, and to arm himself with the kitchen poker, he went down into his own little back-yard. On this mode of approach, he would have a chance of intercepting the murderer; whereas from the front there would be no such chance; and there would also be considerable delay in the process of breaking open the door. A brick wall, 9 or 10 feet high, divided his own back premises from those of Marr. Over this he vaulted; and at the moment when he was recalling himself to the necessity of going back for a candle, he suddenly perceived a feeble ray of light already glimmering on some part of Marr's premises. Marr's back door stood wide open. Probably the murderer had passed through it one half minute before. Rapidly the brave man passed onwards to the shop, and there beheld the carnage of the night stretched out on the floor, and the narrow premises so floated with gore, that it was hardly possible to escape the pollution of blood in picking out a path to the front door. In the lock of the door still remained the key which had given to the unknown murderer so fatal an advantage over his victims. By this time, the heart-shaking news involved in the outcries of

Mary (to whom it occurred that by possibility some one out of so many victims might still be within the reach of medical aid, but that all would depend upon speed) had availed, even at that late hour, to gather a small mob about the house. The pawnbroker threw open the door. One or two watchmen headed the crowd; but the soul-harrowing spectacle checked them, and impressed sudden silence upon their voices, previously so loud. The tragic drama read aloud its own history, and the succession of its several steps—few and summary. The murderer was as yet altogether unknown; not even suspected. But there were reasons for thinking that he must have been a person familiarly known to Marr. He had entered the shop by opening the door after it had been closed by Marr. But it was justly argued—that, after the caution conveyed to Marr by the watchman, the appearance of any stranger in the shop at that hour, and in so dangerous a neighbourhood, and entering by so irregular and suspicious a course (*i.e.*, walking in after the door had been closed, and after the closing of the shutters had cut off all open communication with the street), would naturally have roused Marr to an attitude of vigilance and self defence. Any indication, therefore, that Marr had *not* been so roused, would argue to a certainty that *something* had occurred to neutralise this alarm, and fatally to disarm the prudent jealousies of Marr. But this "something" could only have lain in one simple fact, viz., that the person of the murderer was familiarly known to Marr as that of an ordinary and unsuspected acquaintance. This being presupposed as the key to all the rest, the whole course and evolution of the subsequent drama becomes clear as daylight. The murderer, it is evident, had opened gently, and again closed behind him with equal gentleness, the street door. He had then advanced to the little counter, all the while exchanging the ordinary salutation of an old acquaintance with the unsuspecting Marr. Having reached the counter, he would then ask Marr for a pair of unbleached cotton socks. In a shop so small as Marr's, there could be no great latitude of choice for disposing of the different commodities. The arrangement of these had no doubt become familiar to the murderer; and he had already ascertained that, in order to reach down the particular parcel wanted at present, Marr would find it requisite to face round to the rear, and, at the same moment, to raise his eyes and his hands to a level eighteen inches above his own head. This movement placed him in the most disadvantageous possible position with regard to the murderer, who now, at the instant

when Marr's hands and eyes were embarrassed, and the back of his head fully exposed, suddenly from below his large surtout, he had unslung a heavy ship-carpenter's mallet, and, with one solitary blow, had so thoroughly stunned his victim, as to leave him incapable of resistance. The whole position of Marr told its own tale. He had collapsed naturally behind the counter, with his hands so occupied as to confirm the whole outline of the affair as I have here suggested it. Probable enough it is that the very first blow, the first indication of treachery that reached Marr, would also be the last blow as regarded the abolition of consciousness. The murderer's plan and *rationale* of murder started systematically from this infliction of apoplexy, or at least of a stunning sufficient to insure a long loss of consciousness. This opening step placed the murderer at his ease. But still, as returning sense might constantly have led to the fullest exposures: it was his settled practice, by way of consummation, to cut the throat. To one invariable type all the murders on this occasion conformed: the skull was first shattered; this step secured the murderer from instant retaliation; and, then, by way of locking up all into eternal silence, uniformly the throat was cut. The rest of the circumstances, as self-revealed, were these. The fall of Marr might, probably enough, cause a dull confused sound of a scuffle, and the more so, as it could not now be confounded with any street uproar—the shop-door being shut. It is more probable, however, that the signal for the alarm passing down to the kitchen, would arise when the murderer proceeded to cut Marr's throat. The very confined situation behind the counter would render it impossible, under the critical hurry of the case, to expose the thoat broadly; the horrid scene would proceed by partial and interrupted cuts; deep groans would arise; and then would come the rush up-stairs. Against this, as the only dangerous stage in the transaction, the murderer would have specially prepared. Mrs. Marr and the apprentice-boy, both young and active, would make, of course, for the street-door; had Mary been at home, and three persons at once had combined to distract the purposes of the murderer, it is barely possible that one of them would have succeeded in reaching the street. But the dreadful swing of the heavy mallet intercepted both the boy and his mistress before they could reach the door. Each of them lay stretched out on the centre of the shop floor; and the very moment that this disabling was accomplished, the accursed hound was down upon their throats with his razor. The fact is, that, in the mere blindness of pity

for poor Marr, on hearing his groans, Mrs. Marr had lost sight of her obvious policy; she and the boy ought to have made for the back door; the alarm would thus have been given in the open air; which, of itself, was a great point; and several means of distracting the murderer's attention offered upon that course, which the extreme limitation of the shop denied to them upon the other.

Vain would be all attempts to convey the horror which thrilled the gathering spectators of this pitious tragedy. It was known to the crowd that one person had, by some accident, escaped the general massacre; but she was now speechless, and probably delirious; so that, in compassion for her pitiable situation, one female neighbour had carried her away, and put her to bed. Hence it had happened, for a longer space of time than could else have been possible, that no person present was sufficiently acquainted with the Marrs to be aware of the little infant; for the bold pawnbroker had gone off to make a communication to the coroner; and another neighbour, to lodge some evidence which he thought urgent at a neighbouring police-office. Suddenly some person appeared amongst the crowd who was aware that the murdered parents had a young infant; this would be found either below-stairs, or in one of the bedrooms above. Immediately a stream of people poured down into the kitchen, where at once they saw the cradle—but with the bedclothes in a state of indescribable confusion. On disentangling these, pools of blood became visible; and the next ominous sign was, that the hood of the cradle had been smashed to pieces. It became evident that the wretch had found himself doubly embarrassed—first, by the arched hood, at the head of the cradle which accordingly he had beat into a ruin with his mallet, and secondly, by the gathering of the blankets and pillows about the baby's head. The free play of his blows had thus been baffled. And he had therefore finished the scene by applying his razor to the throat of the little innocent; after which, with no apparent purpose, as though he had become confused by the spectacle of his own atrocities, he had busied himself in piling the clothes elaborately over the child's corpse. This incident undeniably gave the character of a vindictive proceeding to the whole affair, and so far confirmed the current rumour that the quarrel between Williams and Marr had originated in rivalship. One writer, indeed, alleged that the murderer might have found it necessary for his own safety to extinguish the crying of the child; but it was justly replied, that a child only eight months

old could not have cried under any sense of the tragedy proceeding, but simply in its ordinary way for the absence of its mother; and such a cry, even if audible at all out of the house, must have been precisely what the neighbours were hearing constantly, so that it could have drawn no special attention, nor suggested any reasonable alarm to the murderer. No one incident, indeed, throughout the whole tissue of atrocities, so much envenomed the popular fury against the unknown ruffian, as this useless butchery of the infant.

Naturally, on the Sunday morning that dawned four or five hours later, the case was too full of horror not to diffuse itself in all directions; but I have no reason to think that it crept into any one of the numerous Sunday papers. In the regular course, any ordinary occurrence, not occurring, or not transpiring until 15 minutes after 1 a.m. on a Sunday morning, would first reach the public ear through the Monday editions of the Sunday papers, and the regular morning papers of the Monday. But, if such were the course pursued on this occasion, never can there have been a more signal oversight. For it is certain, that to have met the public demand for details on the Sunday, which might so easily have been done by cancelling a couple of dull columns, and substituting a circumstantial narrative, for which the pawnbroker and the watchman could have furnished the materials, would have made a small fortune. By proper handbills dispersed through all quarters of the infinite metropolis, 250,000 extra copies might have been sold; that is, by any journal that should have collected *exclusive* materials, meeting the public excitements, everywhere stirred to the centre by flying rumours, and everywhere burning for ampler information. On the Sunday se'ennight (Sunday the *octave* from the event), took place the funeral of the Marrs; in the first coffin was placed Marr; in the second Mrs. Marr, and the baby in her arms; in the third the apprentice-boy. They were buried side by side; and 30,000 labouring people followed the funeral procession, with horror and grief written in their countenances.

As yet no whisper was astir that indicated, even conjecturally, the hideous author of these ruins—this patron of gravediggers. Had as much been known on this Sunday of the funeral concerning that person as became known universally six days later, the people would have gone right from the churchyard to the murderer's lodgings, and (brooking no delay) would have torn him limb from limb. As yet, however, in mere default of any object on whom reasonable suspicion could settle, the public

wrath was compelled to suspend itself. Else, far indeed from showing any tendency to subside, the public emotion strengthened every day conspicuously, as the reverberation of the shock began to travel back from the provinces to the capital. On every great road in the kingdom continual arrests were made of vagrants and "trampers," who could give no satisfactory account of themselves, or whose appearance in any respect answered to the imperfect description of Williams furnished by the watchman.

With this mighty tide of pity and indignation pointing backwards to the dreadful past, there mingled also in the thoughts of reflecting persons an under-current of fearful expectation for the immediate future. "The earthquake," to quote a fragment from a striking passage in Wordsworth—

"The earthquake is not satisfied at once."

All perils, specially malignant, are recurrent. A murderer, who is such by passion and by a wolfish craving for bloodshed as a mode of unnatural luxury, cannot relapse into *inertia*. Such a man, even more than the Alpine chamois hunter, comes to crave the dangers and the hairbreadth escapes of his trade, as a condiment for seasoning the insipid monotonies of daily life. But, apart from the hellish instincts that might too surely be relied on for renewed atrocities, it was clear that the murderer of the Marrs, wheresoever lurking, must be a needy man; and a needy man of that class least likely to seek or to find resources in honourable modes of industry; for which, equally by haughty disgust and by disuse of the appropriate habits, men of violence are specially disqualified. Were it, therefore, merely for a livelihood, the murderer, whom all hearts were yearning to decipher, might be expected to make his resurrection on some stage of horror, after a reasonable interval. Even in the Marr murder, granting that it had been governed chiefly by cruel and vindictive impulses, it was still clear that the desire of booty had co-operated with such feelings. Equally clear it was that this desire must have been disappointed: excepting the trivial sum reserved by Marr for the week's expenditure, the murderer found, doubtless, little or nothing that he could turn to account. Two guineas, perhaps, would be the outside of what he had obtained in the way of booty. A week or so would see the end of that. The conviction, therefore, of all people was, that in a month or two, when the fever of excitement might a little have cooled down, or have been superseded by other topics of

fresher interest, so that the newborn vigilance of household life would have had time to relax, some new murder, equally appalling, might be counted upon.

Such was the public expectation. Let the reader then figure to himself the pure frenzy of horror when in this hush of expectation, looking, indeed, and waiting for the unknown arm to strike once more, but not believing that any audacity could be equal to such an attempt as yet, whilst all eyes were watching, suddenly, on the twelfth night from the Marr murder, a second case of the same mysterious nature, a murder on the same exterminating plan, was perpetrated in the very same neighbourhood. It was on the Thursday next but one succeeding to the Marr murder that this second atrocity took place; and many people thought at the time, that in its dramatic features of thrilling interest this second case even went beyond the first. The family which suffered in this instance was that of a Mr. Williamson; and the house was situated, if not absolutely *in* Ratcliffe Highway, at any rate immediately round the corner of some secondary street, running at right angles to this public thoroughfare. Mr. Williamson was a well-known and respectable man, long settled in that district; he was supposed to be rich; and more with a view to the employment furnished by such a calling, than with much anxiety for further accumulations, he kept a sort of tavern; which, in this respect, might be considered on an old patriarchal footing—that, although people of considerable property resorted to the house in the evenings, no kind of anxious separation was maintained between them and the other visitors from the class of artisans or common labourers. Anybody who conducted himself with propriety was free to take a seat, and call for any liquor that he might prefer. And thus the society was pretty miscellaneous; in part stationary, but in some proportion fluctuating. The household consisted of the following five persons:—1, Mr. Williamson, its head, who was an old man above seventy, and was well fitted for his situation, being civil, and not at all morose, but, at the same time, firm in maintaining order; 2, Mrs. Williamson, his wife, about ten years younger than himself; 3, a little grand-daughter, about nine years old; 4, a housemaid, who was nearly forty years old; 5, a young journeyman, aged about twenty-six, belonging to some manufacturing establishment (of what class I have forgotten); neither do I remember of what nation he was. It was the established rule at Mr. Williamson's, that, exactly as the clock struck eleven, all the company, with-

out favour or exception, moved off. That was one of the customs by which, in so stormy a district, Mr. Williamson had found it possible to keep his house free from brawls. On the present Thursday night everything had gone on as usual, except for one slight shadow of suspicion, which had caught the attention of more persons than one. Perhaps at a less agitating time it would hardly have been noticed; but now, when the first question and the last in all social meetings turned upon the Marrs, and their unknown murderer, it was a circumstance naturally fitted to cause some uneasiness, that a stranger, of sinister appearance, in a wide surtout, had flitted in and out of the room at intervals during the evening; had sometimes retired from the light into obscure corners; and, by more than one person, had been observed stealing into the private passages of the house. It was presumed in general that the man must be known to Williamson. And, in some slight degree, as an occasional customer of the house, it is not impossible that he *was*. But afterwards, this repulsive stranger, with his cadaverous ghastliness, extraordinary hair, and glazed eyes, showing himself intermittingly through the hours from 8 to 11 p.m., revolved upon the memory of all who had steadily observed him with something of the same freezing effect as belongs to the two assassins in *Macbeth*, who present themselves reeking from the murder of Banquo, and gleaming dimly, with dreadful faces, from the misty background, athwart the pomps of the regal banquet.

Meantime the clock struck eleven; the company broke up; the door of entrance was nearly closed; and at this moment of general dispersion the situation of the five inmates left upon the premises was precisely this: the three elders, viz., Williamson, his wife, and his female servant, were all occupied on the ground-floor—Williamson himself was drawing ale, porter, etc., for those neighbours in whose favour the house door had been left ajar, until the hour of twelve should strike; Mrs. Williamson and her servant were moving to and fro between the back kitchen and a little parlour; the little grand-daughter, whose sleeping room was on the *first* floor (which term in London means always the floor raised by one flight of stairs above the level of the street), had been fast asleep since nine o'clock; lastly, the journeyman artisan had retired to rest for some time. He was a regular lodger in the house; and his bedroom was on the second floor. For some time he had been undressed, and had lain down in bed. Being, as a working man, bound to

habits of early rising, he was naturally anxious to fall asleep as soon as possible. But, on this particular night, his uneasiness, arising from the recent murders at No. 29, rose to a paroxysm of nervous excitement which kept him awake. It is possible, that from somebody he had heard of the suspicious-looking stranger, or might even personally have observed him slinking about. But, were it otherwise, he was aware of several circumstances dangerously affecting this house; for instance, the ruffianism of this whole neighbourhood, and the disagreeable fact that the Marrs had lived within a few doors of this very house, which again argued that the murderer also lived at no great distance. These were matters of *general* alarm. But there were others peculiar to this house; in particular, the notoriety of Williamson's opulence; the belief, whether well or ill founded, that he accumulated, in desks and drawers, the money continually flowing into his hands; and lastly, the danger so ostentatiously courted by that habit of leaving the house door ajar through one entire hour—and that hour loaded with extra danger, by the well-advertised assurance that no collision need be feared with chance convivial visitors, since all such people were banished at eleven. A regulation, which had hitherto operated beneficially for the character and comfort of the house, now, on the contrary, under altered circumstances, became a positive proclamation of exposure and defencelessness, through one entire period of an hour. Williamson himself, it was said generally, being a large unwieldy man, past seventy, and signally inactive, ought, in prudence, to make the locking of his door coincident with the dismissal of his evening party.

Upon these and other grounds of alarm (particularly this, that Mrs. Williamson was reported to possess a considerable quantity of plate), the journeyman was musing painfully, and the time might be within twenty-eight or twenty-five minutes of twelve, when all at once, with a crash, proclaiming some hand of hideous violence, the house door was suddenly shut and locked. Here, then, beyond all doubt, was the diabolic man, clothed in mystery, from No. 29 Ratcliffe Highway. Yes, that dreadful being, who for twelve days had employed all thoughts and all tongues, was now, too certainly, in this defenceless house, and would, in a few minutes, be face to face with every one of its inmates. A question still lingered in the public mind—whether at Marr's there might not have been *two* men at work. If so, there would be two at present; and one of the two would be immediately disposable for the up-stairs work; since no danger could ob-

viously be more immediately fatal to such an attack than any alarm given from an upper window to the passengers in the street. Through one half-minute the poor panic-stricken man sat up motionless in bed. But then he rose, his first movement being towards the door of his room. Not for any purpose of securing it against intrusion—too well he knew that there was no fastening of any sort—neither lock, nor bolt; nor was there any such movable furniture in the room as might have availed to barricade the door, even if time could be counted on for such an attempt. It was no effect of prudence, merely the fascination of killing fear it was, that drove him to open the door. One step brought him to the head of the stairs; he lowered his head over the balustrade in order to listen; and at that moment ascended, from the little parlour, this agonising cry from the woman-servant, "Lord Jesus Christ! we shall all be murdered!" What a Medusa's head must have lurked in those dreadful bloodless features, and those glazed rigid eyes, that seemed rightfully belonging to a corpse, when one glance at them sufficed to proclaim a death-warrant.

Three separate death-struggles were by this time over; and the poor petrified journeyman, quite unconscious of what he was doing, in blind, passive, self-surrender to panic, absolutely descended both flights of stairs. Infinite terror inspired him with the same impulse as might have been inspired by headlong courage. In his shirt, and upon old decaying stairs, that at times creaked under his feet, he continued to descend, until he had reached the lowest step but four. The situation was tremendous beyond any that is on record. A sneeze, a cough, almost a breathing, and the young man would be a corpse, without a chance or a struggle for his life. The murderer was at that time in the little parlour—the door of which parlour faced you in descending the stairs; and this door stood ajar; indeed, much more considerably open than what is understood by the term "ajar." Of that quadrant, or 90 degrees, which the door would describe in swinging so far open as to stand at right angles to the lobby, or to itself, in a closed position, 55 degrees at the least were exposed. Consequently, two out of three corpses were exposed to the young man's gaze. Where was the third? And the murderer—where was he? As to the murderer, he was walking rapidly backwards and forwards in the parlour, audible but not visible at first, being engaged with something or other in that part of the room which the door still concealed. What the something might be, the sound soon explained; he was

applying keys tentatively to a cupboard, a closet, and a scrutoire, in the hidden part of the room. Very soon, however, he came into view; but, fortunately for the young man, at this critical moment, the murderer's purpose too entirely absorbed him to allow of his throwing a glance to the staircase, on which else the white figure of the journeyman, standing in motionless horror, would have been detected in one instant, and seasoned for the grave in the second. As to the third corpse, the missing corpse, viz., Mr. Williamson's, *that* is in the cellar; and how its local position can be accounted for, remains as a separate question much discussed at the time, but never satisfactorily cleared up. Meantime, that Williamson was dead, became evident to the young man; since else he would have been heard stirring or groaning. Three friends, therefore, out of four, whom the young man had parted with forty minutes ago, were now extinguished; remained, therefore, 40 per cent. (a large percentage for Williams to leave); remained, in fact, himself and his pretty young friend, the little grand-daughter, whose childish innocence was still slumbering without fear for herself, or grief for her aged grand-parents. If *they* are gone for ever, happily one friend (for such he will prove himself, indeed, if from such a danger he can save this child) is pretty near to her. But alas! he is still nearer to a murderer. At this moment he is unnerved for any exertion whatever; he has changed into a pillar of ice; for the objects before him, separated by just thirteen feet, are these:—The housemaid had been caught by the murderer on her knees; she was kneeling before the fire-grate, which she had been polishing with black lead. That part of her task was finished; and she had passed on to another task, viz., the filling of the grate with wood and coals, not for kindling at this moment, but so as to have it ready for kindling on the next day. The appearances all showed that she must have been engaged in this labour at the very moment when the murderer entered; and perhaps the succession of the incidents arranged itself as follows:—From the awful ejaculation and loud outcry to Christ, as overheard by the journeyman, it was clear that then first she had been alarmed; yet this was at least one and a-half or even two minutes after the door-slamming. Consequently the alarm which had so fearfully and seasonably alarmed the young man, must, in some unaccountable way, have been misinterpreted by the two women. It was said, at the time, that Mrs. Williamson laboured under some dullness of hearing; and it was conjectured that the servant, having her ears filled

with the noise of her own scrubbing, and her head half under the grate, might have confounded it with the street noises, or else might have imputed this violent closure to some mischievous boys. But, howsoever explained, the fact was evident, that, until the words of appeal to Christ, the servant had noticed nothing suspicious, nothing which interrupted her labours. If so, it followed that neither had Mrs. Williamson noticed anything; for, in that case, she would have communicated her own alarm to the servant, since both were in the same small room. Apparently the course of things after the murderer had entered the room was this:—Mrs. Williamson had probably not seen him, from the accident of standing with her back to the door. Her, therefore, before he was himself observed at all, he had stunned and prostrated by a shattering blow on the back of her head; this blow, inflicted by a crowbar, had smashed in the hinder part of the skull. She fell; and by the noise of her fall (for all was the work of a moment) had first roused the attention of the servant; who then uttered the cry which had reached the young man; but before she could repeat it, the murderer had descended with his uplifted instrument upon *her* head, crushing the skull inwards upon the brain. Both the women were irrecoverably destroyed, so that further outrages were needless; and, moreover, the murderer was conscious of the imminent danger from delay; and yet, in spite of his hurry, so fully did he appreciate the fatal consequences to himself, if any of his victims should so far revive into consciousness as to make circumstantial depositions, that, by way of making this impossible, he had proceeded instantly to cut the throats of each. All this tallied with the appearances as now presenting themselves. Mrs. Williamson had fallen backwards with her head to the door; the servant, from her kneeling posture, had been incapable of rising, and had presented her head passively to blows; after which, the miscreant had but to bend her head backwards so as to expose her throat, and the murder was finished. It is remarkable that the young artisan, paralysed as he had been by fear, and evidently fascinated for a time so as to walk right towards the lion's mouth, yet found himself able to notice everything important. The reader must suppose him at this point watching the murderer whilst hanging over the body of Mrs. Williamson, and whilst renewing his search for certain important keys. Doubtless it was an anxious situation for the murderer; for, unless he speedily found the keys wanted, all this hideous tragedy would end in nothing but a

prodigious increase of the public horror, in tenfold precautions therefore, and redoubled obstacles interposed between himself and his future game. Nay, there was even a nearer interest at stake; his own immediate safety might, by a probable accident, be compromised. Most of those who came to the house for liquor were giddy girls or children, who, on finding this house closed, would go off carelessly to some other; but, let any thoughtful woman or man come to the door now, a full quarter of an hour before the established time of closing, in that case suspicion would arise too powerful to be checked. There would be a sudden alarm given; after which, mere luck would decide the event. For it is a remarkable fact, and one that illustrates the singular inconsistency of this villain, who, being often so superfluously subtle, was in other directions so reckless and improvident, that at this very moment, standing amongst corpses that had deluged the little parlour with blood, Williams must have been in considerable doubt whether he had any sure means of egress. There were windows, he knew, to the back; but upon what ground they opened, he seems to have had no certain information; and in a neighbourhood so dangerous, the windows of the lower storey would not improbably be nailed down; those in the upper might be free, but then came the necessity of a leap too formidable. From all this, however, the sole practical inference was to hurry forward with the trial of further keys, and to detect the hidden treasure. This it was, this intense absorption in one overmastering pursuit, that dulled the murderer's perceptions as to all around him; otherwise, he must have heard the breathing of the young man, which to himself at times became fearfully audible. As the murderer stood once more over the body of Mrs. Williamson, and searched her pockets more narrowly, he pulled out various clusters of keys, one of which dropping, gave a harsh jingling sound upon the floor. At this time it was that the secret witness, from his secret stand, noticed the fact of Williams's surtout being lined with silk of the finest quality. One other fact he noticed, which eventually became more immediately important than many stronger circumstances of incrimination; this was, that the shoes of the murderer, apparently new, and bought, probably, with poor Marr's money, creaked as he walked, harshly and frequently. With the new clusters of keys, the murderer walked off to the hidden section of the parlour. And here, at last, was suggested to the journeyman the sudden opening for an escape. Some minutes would be lost to a certainty in trying

all these keys; and subsequently in searching the drawers, supposing that the keys answered—or in violently forcing them, supposing that they did *not*. He might thus count upon a brief interval of leisure, whilst the rattling of the keys might obscure to the murderer the creaking of the stairs under the reascending journeyman. His plan was now formed: on regaining his bedroom, he placed the bed against the door by way of a transient retardation to the enemy, that might give him a short warning, and in the worst extremity, might give him a chance for life by means of a desperate leap. This change made as quietly as was possible, he tore the sheets, pillow-cases, and blankets into broad ribbons; and after plaiting them into ropes, spliced the different lengths together. But at the very first he descries this ugly addition to his labours. Where shall he look for any staple, hook, bar, or other fixture, from which his rope, when twisted, may safely depend? Measured from the window-*sill*—*i.e.*, the lowest part of the window architrave—there count but twenty-two or twenty-three feet to the ground. Of this length ten or twelve feet may be looked upon as cancelled, because to that extent he might drop without danger. So much being deducted, there would remain, say, a dozen feet of rope to prepare. But, unhappily there is no stout iron fixture anywhere about his window. The nearest, indeed the sole fixture of that sort, is not near to the window at all; it is a spike fixed (for no reason at all that is apparent) in the bed-tester; now, the bed being shifted, the spike is shifted; and its distance from the window, having always been four feet, is now seven. Seven entire feet, therefore, must be added to that which would have sufficed if measured from the window. But courage! God, by the proverb of all nations in Christendom, helps those that help themselves. This our young man thankfully acknowledges; he reads already, in the very fact of any spike at all being found where hitherto it has been useless, an earnest of providential aid. Were it only for himself that he worked, he could not feel himself meritoriously employed; but this is not so; in deep sincerity, he is now agitated for the poor child, whom he knows and loves; every minute, he feels, brings ruin nearer to *her;* and, as he passed her door, his first thought had been to take her out of bed in his arms, and to carry her where she might share his chances. But, on consideration, he felt that this sudden awaking of her, and the impossibility of even whispering any explanation, would cause her to cry audibly; and the inevitable indiscretion of one would be fatal to the two. As the Alpine

avalanches, when suspended above the traveller's head, oftentimes (we are told) come down through the stirring of the air by a simple whisper, precisely on such a tenure of a whisper was now suspended the murderous malice of the man below. No; there is but one way to save the child; towards *her* deliverance, the first step is through his own. And he has made an excellent beginning; for the spike, which too fearfully he had expected to see torn away by any strain upon it from the half-carious wood, stands firmly when tried against the pressure of his own weight. He has rapidly fastened on to it three lengths of his new rope, measuring eleven feet. He plaits it roughly; so that only three feet have been lost in the intertwisting; he has spliced on a second length equal to the first; so that, already, sixteen feet are ready to throw out of the window; and thus, let the worst come to the worst, it will not be absolute ruin to swarm down the rope so far as it will reach, and then to drop boldly. All this has been accomplished in about six minutes; and the hot contest between above and below is still steadily but fervently proceeding. Murderer is working hard in the parlour; journeyman is working hard in the bedroom. Miscreant is getting on famously downstairs; one batch of bank-notes he has already bagged; and is hard upon the scent of a second. He has also sprung a covey of golden coins. Sovereigns as yet were not; but guineas at this period fetched thirty shillings apiece; and he has worked his way into a little quarry of these. Murderer is almost joyous; and if any creature is still living in this house, as shrewdly he suspects, and very soon means to know, with that creature he would be happy, before cutting the creature's throat, to drink a glass of something. Instead of the glass, might he not make a present to the poor creature of its throat? Oh no! impossible! Throats are a sort of thing that he never makes presents of; business—business must be attended to. Really the two men, considered simply as men of business, are both meritorious. Like chorus and semi-chorus, strophe and anti-strophe, they work each against the other. Pull journeyman, pull murderer! Pull baker, pull devil! As regards the journeyman, he is now safe. To his sixteen feet, of which seven are neutralised by the distance of the bed, he has at last added six feet more, which will be short of reaching the ground by perhaps ten feet—a trifle which man or boy may drop without injury. All is safe, therefore, for him: which is more than one can be sure of for miscreant in the parlour. Miscreant, however, takes it coolly enough; the reason being,

that, with all his cleverness, for once in his life miscreant has been over-reached. The reader and I know, but miscreant does not in the least suspect, a little fact of some importance, viz., that just now through a space of full three minutes he has been overlooked and studied by one, who (though reading in a dreadful book, and suffering under mortal panic) took accurate notes of so much as his limited opportunities allowed him to see, and will assuredly report the creaking shoes and the silk-mounted surtout in quarters where such little facts will tell very little to his advantage. But, although it is true that Mr. Williams, unaware of the journeyman's having "assisted" at the examination of Mrs. Williamson's pockets, could not connect any anxiety with that person's subsequent proceedings, nor specially, therefore, with his having embarked in the rope-weaving line, assuredly he knew of reasons enough for not loitering. And yet he *did* loiter. Reading his acts by the light of such mute traces as he left behind him, the police became aware that latterly he must have loitered. And the reason which governed him is striking; because at once it records—that murder was not pursued by him simply as a means to an end, but also as an end for itself. Mr. Williams had now been upon the premises for perhaps fifteen or twenty minutes; and in that space of time he had despatched, in a style satisfactory to himself, a considerable amount of business. He had done, in commercial language, "a good stroke of business." Upon two floors, viz., the cellar-floor and the ground-floor, he has "accounted for" all the population. But there remained at least two floors more; and it now occurred to Mr. Williams that, although the landlord's somewhat chilling manner had shut him out from any familiar knowledge of the household arrangements, too probably on one or other of those floors there must be some throats. As to plunder, he has already bagged the whole. And it was next to impossible that any arrear the most trivial should still remain for a gleaner. But the throats—the throats—there it was that arrears and gleanings might perhaps be counted on. And thus it appeared that, in his wolfish thirst for blood, Mr. Williams put to hazard the whole fruits of his night's work, and his life into the bargain. At this moment, if the murderer knew all, could he see the open window above stairs ready for the descent of the journeyman, could he witness the life-and-death rapidity with which that journeyman is working, could he guess at the almighty uproar which within ninety seconds will be maddening the population of this populous district—no picture of a maniac

in flight of panic or in pursuit of vengeance would adequately represent the agony of haste with which he would himself be hurrying to the street-door for final evasion. That mode of escape was still free. Even at this moment, there yet remained time sufficient for a successful flight, and, therefore, for the following revolution in the romance of his own abominable life. He had in his pockets above a hundred pounds of booty; means, therefore, for a full disguise. This very night, if he will shave off his yellow hair, and blacken his eyebrows, buying, when morning light returns, a dark-coloured wig, and clothes such as may co-operate in personating the character of a grave professional man, he may elude all suspicions of impertinent policemen—may sail by any one of a hundred vessels bound for any port along the huge line of sea-board (stretching through 2400 miles) of the American United States; may enjoy fifty years for leisurely repentance; and may even die in the odour of sanctity. On the other hand, if he prefer active life, it is not impossible that, with *his* subtlety, hardihood, and unscrupulousness, in a land where the simple process of naturalisation converts the alien at once into a child of the family, he might rise to the president's chair; might have a statue at his death; and afterwards a life in three volumes quarto, with no hint glancing towards No. 29, Ratcliffe Highway. But all depends on the next ninety seconds. Within that time there is a sharp turn to be taken; there is a wrong turn, and a right turn. Should his better angel guide him to the right one, all may yet go well as regards this world's prosperity. But behold; in two minutes from this point we shall see him take the wrong one: and then Nemesis will be at his heels with ruin perfect and sudden.

Meantime, if the murderer allows himself to loiter, the rope-maker overhead does *not*. Well he knows that the poor child's fate is on the edge of a zazor; for all turns upon the alarm being raised before the murderer reaches her bedside. And at this very moment, whilst desperate agitation is nearly paralysing his fingers, he hears the sullen stealthy step of the murderer creeping up through the darkness. It had been the expectation of the journeyman (founded on the clamorous uproar with which the street-door was slammed) that Williams, when disposable for his upstairs work, would come racing at a long jubilant gallop, and with a tiger roar; and perhaps, on his natural instincts, he would have done so. But this mode of approach, which was of dreadful effect when applied to a case of surprise, became dangerous in the case of people who might by this time

have been placed fully upon their guard. The step which he had heard was on the staircase—but upon which stair? He fancied upon the lowest: and in a movement so slow and cautious, even this might make all the difference; yet might it not have been the tenth, twelfth, or fourteenth stair? Never, perhaps, in this world did any man feel his own responsibility so cruelly loaded and strained, as at this moment did the poor journeyman on behalf of the slumbering child. Lose but two seconds, through awkwardness or through the self-counteractions of panic, and for *her* the total difference arose between life and death. Still there is a hope: and nothing can so frightfully expound the hellish nature of him whose baleful shadow, to speak astrologically, at this moment darkens the house of life, than the simple expression of the ground on which this hope rested. The journeyman felt sure that the murderer would not be satisfied to kill the poor child whilst unconscious. This would be to defeat his whole purpose in murdering her at all. To an epicure in murder such as Williams, it would be taking away the very sting of the enjoyment, if the poor child should be suffered to drink off the bitter cup of death without fully apprehending the misery of the situation. But this luckily would require time: the double confusion of mind, first, from being roused up at so unusual an hour, and, secondly, from the horror of the occasion when explained to her, would at first produce fainting, or some mode of insensibility or distraction, such as must occupy a considerable time. The logic of the case, in short, all rested upon the *ultra* fiendishness of Williams. Were he likely to be content with the mere fact of the child's death, apart from the process and leisurely expansion of its mental agony—in that case there would be no hope. But, because our present murderer is fastidiously finical in his exactions—a sort of martinet in the scenical grouping and draping of the circumstances in his murders—therefore it is that hope becomes reasonable, since all such refinements of preparation demand time. Murders of mere necessity Williams was obliged to hurry; but, in a murder of pure voluptuousness, entirely disinterested, where no hostile witness was to be removed, no extra booty to be gained, and no revenge to be gratified, it is clear that to hurry would be altogether to ruin. If this child, therefore, is to be saved, it will be on pure æsthetical considerations.[1]

[1] Let the reader, who is disposed to regard as exaggerated or romantic the pure fiendishness imputed to Williams, recollect that, except for the

But all considerations whatever are at this moment suddenly cut short. A second step is heard on the stairs, but still stealthy and cautious; a third—and then the child's doom seems fixed. But just at that moment all is ready. The window is wide open; the rope is swinging free; the journeyman has launched himself; and already he is in the first stage of his descent. Simply by the weight of his person he descended, and by the resistance of his hands he retarded the descent. The danger was, that the rope should run too smoothly through his hands, and that by too rapid an acceleration of pace he should come violently to the ground. Happily he was able to resist the descending impetus: the knots of the splicings furnished a succession of retardations. But the rope proved shorter by four or five feet than he had calculated: ten or eleven feet from the ground he hung suspended in the air; speechless for the present, through long-continued agitation; and not daring to drop boldly on the rough carriage pavement, lest he should fracture his legs. But the night was not dark, as it had been on occasion of the Marr murders. And yet, for purposes of criminal police, it was by accident worse than the darkest night that ever hid a murder or baffled a pursuit. London, from east to west, was covered with a deep pall (rising from the river) of universal fog. Hence it happened, that for twenty or thirty seconds the young man hanging in the air was not observed. His white shirt at length attracted notice. Three or four people ran up, and received him in their arms, all anticipating some dreadful annunciation. To what house did he belong? Even *that* was not instantly apparent; but he pointed with his finger to Williamson's door, and said in a half-choking whisper—"*Marr's murderer, now at work!*"

All explained itself in a moment: the silent language of the fact made its own eloquent revelation. The mysterious exterminator of No. 29, Ratcliffe Highway had visited another house; and, behold! one man only had escaped through the air, and in his night-dress, to tell the tale. Superstitiously, there was something to check the pursuit of this unintelligible criminal. Morally, and in the interests of vindicative justice, there was everything to rouse, quicken, and sustain it.

luxurious purpose of basking and revelling in the anguish of dying despair, he had no motive at all, small or great, for attempting the murder of this young girl. She had seen nothing, heard nothing—was fast asleep, and her door was closed; so that, as a witness against him, he knew that she was as useless as any one of the three corpses. And yet he *was* making preparations for her murder, when the alarm in the street interrupted him.

Yes, Marr's murderer—the man of mystery—was again at work; at this moment perhaps extinguishing some lamp of life, and not at any remote place, but here—in the very house which the listeners to this dreadful announcement were actually touching. The chaos and blind uproar of the scene which followed, measured by the crowded reports in the journals of many subsequent days, and in one feature of that case, has never to my knowledge had its parallel; or, if a parallel, only in one case—what followed, I mean, on the acquittal of the seven bishops at Westminster in 1688. At present there was more than passionate enthusiasm. The frenzied movement of mixed horror and exultation—the ululation of vengeance which ascended instantaneously from the individual street, and then by a sublime sort of magnetic contagion from all the adjacent streets, can be adequately expressed only by a rapturous passage in Shelley:—

> "The transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness
> Spread through the multitudinous streets, fast flying
> Upon the wings of fear:—From his dull madness
> The starveling waked, and died in joy: the dying,
> Among the corpses in stark agony lying,
> Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope,
> Closed their faint eyes: from house to house replying
> With loud acclaim the living shook heaven's cope,
> And fill'd the startled earth with echoes." [1]

There was something, indeed, half inexplicable in the instantaneous interpretation of the gathering shout according to its true meaning. In fact, the deadly roar of vengeance, and its sublime unity, *could* point in this district only to the one demon whose idea had brooded and tyrannised, for twelve days, over the general heart: every door, every window in the neighbourhood, flew open as if at a word of command; multitudes, without waiting for the regular means of egress, leaped down at once from the windows on the lower storey; sick men rose from their beds; in one instance, as if expressly to verify the image of Shelley (in v. 4, 5, 6, 7), a man whose death had been looked for through some days, and who actually *did* die on the following day, rose, armed himself with a sword, and descended in his shirt into the street. The chance was a good one, and the mob were made aware of it, for catching the wolfish dog in the high noon and carnival of his bloody revels—in the very centre of his own shambles. For a moment the mob was self-baffled by its own numbers and its own fury. But even that fury felt the call for self-control. It was evident that the massy street-door

[1] *Revolt of Islam*, canto xii.

must be driven in, since there was no longer any living person to co-operate with their efforts from within, excepting only a female child. Crowbars dexterously applied in one minute threw the door out of hangings, and the people entered like a torrent. It may be guessed with what fret and irritation to their consuming fury, a signal of pause and absolute silence was made by a person of local importance. In the hope of receiving some useful communication, the mob became silent. "Now listen," said the man of authority, "and we shall learn whether he is above-stairs or below." Immediately a noise was heard as if of some one forcing windows, and clearly the sound came from a bedroom above. Yes, the fact was apparent that the murderer was even yet in the house: he had been caught in a trap. Not having made himself familiar with the details of Williamson's house, to all appearance he had suddenly become a prisoner in one of the upper rooms. Towards this the crowd now rushed impetuously. The door, however, was found to be slightly fastened; and, at the moment when this was forced, a loud crash of the window, both glass and frame, announced that the wretch had made his escape. He had leaped down; and several persons in the crowd, who burned with the general fury, leaped after him. These persons had not troubled themselves about the nature of the ground; but now, on making an examination of it with torches, they reported it to be an inclined plane, or embankment of clay, very wet and adhesive. The prints of the man's footsteps were deeply impressed upon the clay, and therefore easily traced up to the summit of the embankment; but it was perceived at once that pursuit would be useless, from the density of the mist. Two feet ahead of you, a man was entirely withdrawn from your power of identification; and, on overtaking him, you could not venture to challenge him as the same whom you had lost sight of. Never, through the course of a whole century, could there be a night expected more propitious to an escaping criminal: means of disguise Williams now had in excess; and the dens were innumerable in the neighbourhood of the river that could have sheltered him for years from troublesome inquiries. But favours are thrown away upon the reckless and the thankless. That night, when the turning-point offered itself for his whole future career, Williams took the wrong turn; for, out of mere indolence, he took the turn to his old lodgings—that place which, in all England, he had just now the most reason to shun.

Meantime the crowd had thoroughly searched the premises

of Williamson. The first inquiry was for the young granddaughter. Williams, it was evident, had gone into her room: but in this room apparently it was that the sudden uproar in the streets had surprised him; after which his undivided attention had been directed to the windows, since through these only any retreat had been left open to him. Even this retreat he owed only to the fog and to the hurry of the moment, and to the difficulty of approaching the premises by the rear. The little girl was naturally agitated by the influx of strangers at that hour; but otherwise, through the humane precautions of the neighbours, she was preserved from all knowledge of the dreadful events that had occurred whilst she herself was sleeping. Her poor old grandfather was still missing, until the crowd descended into the cellar; he was then found lying prostrate on the cellar floor: apparently he had been thrown down from the top of the cellar stairs, and with so much violence that one leg was broken. After he had been thus disabled, Williams had gone down to him, and cut his throat. There was much discussion at the time, in some of the public journals, upon the possibility of reconciling these incidents with other circumstantialities of the case, supposing that only one man had been concerned in the affair. That there *was* only one man concerned seems to be certain. One only was seen or heard at Marr's: one only, and beyond all doubt the same man, was seen by the young journeyman in Mrs. Williamson's parlour; and one only was traced by his footmarks on the clay embankment. Apparently the course which he had pursued was this: he had introduced himself to Williamson by ordering some beer. This order would oblige the old man to go down into the cellar; Williams would wait until he had reached it, and would then "slam" and lock the street-door in the violent way described. Williamson would come up in agitation upon hearing this violence. The murderer, aware that he would do so, met him, no doubt, at the head of the cellar stairs, and threw him down; after which he would go down to consummate the murder in his ordinary way. All this would occupy a minute, or a minute and a half; and in that way the interval would be accounted for that elapsed between the alarming sound of the street-door as heard by the journeyman, and the lamentable outcry of the female servant. It is evident also, that the reason why no cry whatsoever had been heard from the lips of Mrs. Williamson, is due to the positions of the parties as I have sketched them. Coming behind Mrs. Williamson, unseen therefore, and from her deafness unheard, the murderer would

inflict entire abolition of consciousness while she was yet unaware of his presence. But with the servant, who had unavoidably witnessed the attack upon her mistress, the murderer could not obtain the same fullness of advantage; and *she* therefore had time for making an agonising ejaculation.

It has been mentioned, that the murderer of the Marrs was not for nearly a fortnight so much as suspected; meaning that, previously to the Williamson murder, no vestige of any ground for suspicion in any direction whatever had occurred either to the general public or to the police. But there were two very limited exceptions to this state of absolute ignorance. Some of the magistrates had in their possession something which, when closely examined, offered a very probable means for tracing the criminal. But as yet they had *not* traced him. Until the Friday morning next after the destruction of the Williamsons, they had not published the important fact, that upon the ship-carpenter's mallet (with which, as regarded the stunning or disabling process, the murders had been achieved) were inscribed the letters " J. P." This mallet had, by a strange oversight on the part of the murderer, been left behind in Marr's shop; and it is an interesting fact, therefore, that, had the villain been intercepted by the brave pawnbroker, he would have been met virtually disarmed. This public notification was made officially on the Friday, viz., on the thirteenth day after the first murder. And it was instantly followed (as will be seen) by a most important result. Meantime, within the secrecy of one single bedroom in all London, it is a fact that Williams had been whisperingly the object of very deep suspicion from the very first—that is, within that same hour which witnessed the Marr tragedy. And singular it is, that the suspicion was due entirely to his own folly. Williams lodged, in company with other men of various nations, at a public-house. In a large dormitory there were arranged five or six beds; these were occupied by artisans, generally of respectable character. One or two Englishmen there were, one or two Scotchmen, three or four Germans, and Williams, whose birthplace was not certainly known. On the fatal Saturday night, about half-past one o'clock, when Williams returned from his dreadful labours, he found the English and Scotch party asleep, but the Germans awake: one of them was sitting up with a lighted candle in his hands, and reading aloud to the other two. Upon this, Williams said, in an angry and very peremptory tone, " Oh, put that candle out; put it out directly: we shall all be burned in our beds." Had the British

party in the room been awake, Mr. Williams would have roused a mutinous protest against this arrogant mandate. But Germans are generally mild and facile in their tempers; so the light was complaisantly extinguished. Yet, as there were no curtains, it struck the Germans that the danger was really none at all; for bed-clothes, massed upon each other, will no more burn than the leaves of a closed book. Privately, therefore, the Germans drew an inference, that Mr. Williams must have had some urgent motive for withdrawing his own person and dress from observation. What this motive might be, the next day's news diffused all over London, and of course at this house, not two furlongs from Marr's shop, made awfully evident; and, as may well be supposed, the suspicion was communicated to the other members of the dormitory. All of them, however, were aware of the legal danger attaching, under English law, to insinuations against a man, even if true, which might not admit of proof. In reality, had Williams used the most obvious precautions, had he simply walked down to the Thames (not a stone's-throw distant), and flung two of his implements into the river, no conclusive proof could have been adduced against him. And he might have realised the scheme of Courvoisier (the murderer of Lord William Russell)—viz., have sought each separate month's support in a separate well-concerted murder. The party in the dormitory, meantime, were satisfied themselves, but waited for evidences that might satisfy others. No sooner, therefore, had the official notice been published as to the initials J. P. on the mallet, than every man in the house recognised at once the well-known initials of an honest Norwegian ship-carpenter, John Petersen, who had worked in the English dockyards until the present year; but, having occasion to revisit his native land, had left his box of tools in the garrets of this inn. These garrets were now searched. Petersen's tool-chest was found, but wanting the mallet; and, on further examination, another overwhelming discovery was made. The surgeon, who examined the corpses at Williamson's, had given it as his opinion that the throats were not cut by means of a razor, but of some implement differently shaped. It was now remembered that Williams had recently borrowed a large French knife of peculiar construction; and accordingly, from a heap of old lumber and rags, there was soon extricated a waistcoat, which the whole house could swear to as recently worn by Williams. In this waistcoat, and glued by gore to the lining of its pocket, was found the French knife. Next, it was matter

of notoriety to everybody in the inn, that Williams ordinarily wore at present a pair of creaking shoes, and a brown surtout lined with silk. Many other presumptions seemed scarcely called for. Williams was immediately apprehended, and briefly examined. This was on the Friday. On the Saturday morning (viz., fourteen days from the Marr murders), he was again brought up. The circumstantial evidence was overwhelming; Williams watched its course, but said very little. At the close, he was fully committed for trial at the next sessions; and it is needless to say, that, on his road to prison, he was pursued by mobs so fierce, that, under ordinary circumstances, there would have been small hope of escaping summary vengeance. But upon this occasion a powerful escort had been provided; so that he was safely lodged in jail. In this particular jail at this time, the regulation was, that at five o'clock p.m. all the prisoners on the criminal side should be finally locked up for the night, and without candles. For fourteen hours (that is, until seven o'clock on the next morning) they were left unvisited, and in total darkness. Time, therefore, Williams had for committing suicide. The means in other respects were small. One iron bar there was, meant (if I remember) for the suspension of a lamp; upon this he had hanged himself by his braces. At what hour was uncertain: some people fancied at midnight. And in that case, precisely at the hour when, fourteen days before, he had been spreading horror and desolation through the quiet family of poor Marr, now was he forced into drinking of the same cup, presented to his lips by the same accursed hands.

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The case of the M'Keans, which has been specially alluded to, merits also a slight rehearsal for the dreadful picturesqueness of some two or three amongst its circumstances. The scene of this murder was at a rustic inn, some few miles (I think) from Manchester; and the advantageous situation of this inn it was, out of which arose the twofold temptations of the case. Generally speaking, an inn argues, of course, a close cincture of neighbours—as the original motive for opening such an establishment. But, in this case, the house individually was solitary, so that no interruption was to be looked for from any persons living within reach of screams; and yet, on the other hand, the circumjacent vicinity was eminently populous; as one consequence of which, a benefit club had established its weekly rendezvous in this inn, and left the pecuniary accumulations in their club-room under the custody of the landlord. This fund arose often to a

considerable amount, fifty or seventy pounds, before it was transferred to the hands of a banker. Here, therefore, was a treasure worth some little risk, and a situation that promised next to none. These attractive circumstances had, by accident, become accurately known to one or both of the two M'Keans; and, unfortunately, at a moment of overwhelming misfortune to themselves. They were hawkers; and, until lately, had borne most respectable characters: but some mercantile crash had overtaken them with utter ruin, in which their joint capital had been swallowed up to the last shilling. This sudden prostration had made them desperate: their own little property had been swallowed up in a large *social* catastrophe, and society at large they looked upon as accountable to them for a robbery. In preying, therefore, upon society, they considered themselves pursuing a wild natural justice of retaliation. The money aimed at did certainly assume the character of public money, being the product of many separate subscriptions. They forgot, however, that in the murderous acts, which too certainly they meditated as preliminaries to the robbery, they could plead no such imaginary social precedent. In dealing with a family that seemed almost helpless, if all went smoothly, they relied entirely upon their own bodily strength. They were stout young men, twenty-eight to thirty-two years old; somewhat undersized as to height; but squarely built, deep-chested, broad-shouldered, and so beautifully formed, as regarded the symmetry of their limbs and their articulations, that, after their execution, the bodies were privately exhibited by the surgeons of the Manchester Infirmary, as objects of statuesque interest. On the other hand, the household which they proposed to attack consisted of the following four persons:—1, the landlord, a stoutish farmer—but *him* they intended to disable by a trick then newly introduced amongst robbers, and termed *hocussing, i.e.*, clandestinely drugging the liquor of the victim with laudanum; 2, the landlord's wife; 3, a young servant-woman; 4, a boy, twelve or fourteen years old. The danger was, that out of four persons, scattered by possibility over a house which had two separate exits, one at least might escape, and by better acquaintance with the adjacent paths, might succeed in giving an alarm to some of the houses a furlong distant. Their final resolution was, to be guided by circumstances as to the mode of conducting the affair; and yet, as it seemed essential to success that they should assume the air of strangers to each other, it was necessary that they should preconcert some general outline of their plan;

since it would on this scheme be impossible, without awaking violent suspicions, to make any communications under the eyes of the family. This outline included, at the least, one murder: so much was settled; but, otherwise, their subsequent proceedings make it evident that they wished to have as little bloodshed as was consistent with their final object. On the appointed day, they presented themselves separately at the rustic inn, and at different hours. One came as early as four o'clock in the afternoon; the other not until half-past seven. They saluted each other distantly and shyly; and, though occasionally exchanging a few words in the character of strangers, did not seem disposed to any familiar intercourse. With the landlord, however, on his return about eight o'clock from Manchester, one of the brothers entered into a lively conversation: invited him to take a tumbler of punch; and, at a moment when the landlord's absence from the room allowed it, poured into the punch a spoonful of laudanum. Some time after this, the clock struck ten; upon which the elder M'Kean, professing to be weary, asked to be shown up to his bedroom: for each brother, immediately on arriving, had engaged a bed. On this, the poor servant-girl presented herself with a bed-candle to light him upstairs. At this critical moment the family were distributed thus:—the landlord, stupefied with the horrid narcotic which he had drunk, had retired to a private room adjoining the public room, for the purpose of reclining upon a sofa: and he, luckily for his own safety, was looked upon as entirely incapacitated for action. The landlady was occupied with her husband. And thus the younger M'Kean was left alone in the public room. He rose, therefore, softly, and placed himself at the foot of the stairs which his brother had just ascended, so as to be sure of intercepting any fugitive from the bedroom above. Into that room the elder M'Kean was ushered by the servant, who pointed to two beds—one of which was already half occupied by the boy, and the other empty: in these, she intimated that the two strangers must dispose of themselves for the night, according to any arrangement that they might agree upon. Saying this, she presented him with the candle, which he in a moment placed upon the table; and, intercepting her retreat from the room, threw his arms around her neck with a gesture as though he meant to kiss her. This was evidently what she herself anticipated, and endeavoured to prevent. Her horror may be imagined, when she felt the perfidious hand that clasped her neck armed with a razor, and violently cutting her throat. She was hardly able

to utter one scream, before she sank powerless upon the floor. This dreadful spectacle was witnessed by the boy, who was not asleep, but had presence of mind enough instantly to close his eyes. The murderer advanced hastily to the bed, and anxiously examined the expression of the boy's features: satisfied he was not, and he then placed his hand upon the boy's heart, in order to judge by its beatings whether he were agitated or not. This was a dreadful trial: and no doubt the counterfeit sleep would immediately have been detected, when suddenly a dreadful spectacle drew off the attention of the murderer. Solemnly, and in ghostly silence, uprose in her dying delirium the murdered girl; she stood upright, she walked steadily for a moment or two, she bent her steps towards the door. The murderer turned away to pursue her; and at that moment the boy, feeling that his one solitary chance was to fly whilst this scene was in progress, bounded out of bed. On the landing at the head of the stairs was one murderer, at the foot of the stairs was the other: who could believe that the boy had the shadow of a chance for escaping? And yet, in the most natural way, he surmounted all hindrances. In the boy's horror, he laid his left hand on the balustrade, and took a flying leap over it, which landed him at the bottom of the stairs, without having touched a single stair. He had thus effectually passed one of the murderers: the other, it is true, was still to be passed; and this would have been impossible but for a sudden accident. The landlady had been alarmed by the faint scream of the young woman; had hurried from her private room to the girl's assistance; but at the foot of the stairs had been intercepted by the younger brother, and was at this moment struggling with *him*. The confusion of this life-and-death conflict had allowed the boy to whirl past them. Luckily he took a turn into a kitchen, out of which was a back door, fastened by a single bolt, that ran freely at a touch; and through this door he rushed into the open fields. But at this moment the elder brother was set free for pursuit by the death of the poor girl. There is no doubt, that in her delirium the image moving through her thoughts was that of the club, which met once a-week. She fancied it no doubt sitting; and to this room, for help and for safety, she staggered along; she entered it, and within the doorway once more she dropped down, and instantly expired. Her murderer, who had followed her closely, now saw himself set at liberty for the pursuit of the boy. At this critical moment, all was at stake; unless the boy were caught, the enterprise was ruined. He passed his brother,

therefore and the landlady without pausing, and rushed through the open door into the fields. By a single second, perhaps, he was too late. The boy was keenly aware that if he continued in sight, he would have no chance of escaping from a powerful young man. He made, therefore, at once for a ditch, into which he tumbled headlong. Had the murderer ventured to make a leisurely examination of the nearest ditch, he would easily have found the boy—made so conspicuous by his white shirt. But he lost all heart, upon failing at once to arrest the boy's flight. And every succeeding second made his despair the greater. If the boy had really effected his escape to the neighbouring farm-houses, a party of men might be gathered within five minutes; and already it might have become difficult for himself and his brother, unacquainted with the field paths, to evade being intercepted. Nothing remained, therefore, but to summon his brother away. Thus it happened that the landlady, though mangled, escaped with life, and eventually recovered. The landlord owed his safety to the stupefying potion. And the baffled murderers had the misery of knowing that their dreadful crime had been altogether profitless. The road, indeed, was now open to the club-room; and, probably, forty seconds would have sufficed to carry off the box of treasure, which afterwards might have been burst open and pillaged at leisure. But the fear of intercepting enemies was too strongly upon them; and they fled rapidly by a road which carried them actually within six feet of the lurking boy. That night they passed through Manchester. When daylight returned, they slept in a thicket twenty miles distant from the scene of their guilty attempt. On the second and third nights, they pursued their march on foot, resting again during the day. About sunrise on the fourth morning, they were entering some village near Kirby Lonsdale, in Westmoreland. They must have designedly quitted the direct line of route; for their object was Ayrshire, of which county they were natives; and the regular road would have led them through Shap, Penrith, Carlisle. Probably they were seeking to elude the persecution of the stage-coaches, which, for the last thirty hours, had been scattering at all the inns and road-side *cabarets* hand-bills describing their persons and dress. It happened (perhaps through design) that on this fourth morning they had separated, so as to enter the village ten minutes apart from each other. They were exhausted and footsore. In this condition it was easy to stop them. A blacksmith had silently reconnoitred them, and compared their appearance with the

descriptions of the hand-bills. They were then easily overtaken, and separately arrested. Their trial and condemnation speedily followed at Lancaster; and in those days it followed, of course, that they were executed. Otherwise, their case fell so far within the sheltering limits of what would *now* be regarded as extenuating circumstances—that, whilst a murder more or less was not to repel them from their object, very evidently they were anxious to economise the bloodshed as much as possible. Immeasurable, therefore, was the interval which divided them from the monster Williams. They perished on the scaffold: Williams, as I have said, by his own hand; and, in obedience to the law as it then stood, he was buried in the centre of a *quadrivium*, or conflux of four roads (in this case four streets), with a stake driven through his heart. And over him drives for ever the uproar of unresting London!

JOAN OF ARC[1]

IN REFERENCE TO M. MICHELET'S "HISTORY OF FRANCE"

WHAT is to be thought of *her?* What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that—like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forest of Judea—rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an *act*, by a victorious *act*, such as no man could deny. But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender; but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them *from a station of good-will*, both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose to a splendour and a noonday prosperity, both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people, and became a by-word amongst his posterity for a thousand years, until the sceptre was departing from Judah. The poor, forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together

[1] "*Arc:*"—Modern France, that should know a great deal better than myself, insists that the name is not D'Arc—*i.e.* of Arc—but *Darc*. Now it happens sometimes, that if a person, whose position guarantees his access to the best information, will content himself with gloomy dogmatism, striking the table with his fist, and saying, in a terrific voice, "It *is* so, and there's an end of it," one bows deferentially, and submits. But if, unhappily for himself, won by this docility, he relents too amiably into reasons and arguments, probably one raises an insurrection against him that may never be crushed; for in the fields of logic one can skirmish, perhaps, as well as he. Had he confined himself to dogmatism, he would have intrenched his position in darkness, and have hidden his own vulnerable points. But coming down to base reasons, he lets in light, and one sees where to plant the blows. Now, the worshipful reason of modern France for disturbing the old received spelling, is—that Jean Hordal, a descendant of *La Pucelle's* brother, spelled the name *Darc* in 1612. But what of that? It is notorious that what small matter of spelling Providence had thought fit to disburse amongst man in the seventeenth century was all monopolised by printers; now M. Hordal was *not* a printer.

with the songs that rose in her native Domrémy, as echoes to the departing steps of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent; no! for her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! whom, from earliest youth, ever I believed in as full of truth and self-sacrifice, this was amongst the strongest pledges for *thy* truth, that never once—no, not for a moment of weakness—didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honour from man. Coronets for thee! Oh no! Honours, if they come when all is over, are for those that share thy blood.[1] Daughter of Domrémy, when the gratitude of thy king shall awaken, thou wilt be sleeping the sleep of the dead. Call her, king of France, but she will not hear thee! Cite her by thy apparitors to come and receive a robe of honour, but she will be found *en contumace*. When the thunders of universal France, as even yet may happen, shall proclaim the grandeur of the poor shepherd girl that gave up all for her country, thy ear, young shepherd girl, will have been deaf for five centuries. To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; that was thy destiny; and not for a moment was it hidden from thyself. Life, thou saidst, is short; and the sleep which is in the grave is long; Let me use that life, so transitory, for the glory of those heavenly dreams destined to comfort the sleep which is so long. This pure creature—pure from every suspicion of even a visionary self-interest, even as she was pure in senses more obvious—never once did this holy child, as regarded herself, relax from her belief in the darkness that was travelling to meet her. She might not prefigure the very manner of her death; she saw not in vision, perhaps, the aerial altitude of the fiery scaffold, the spectators without end on every road pouring into Rouen as to a coronation, the surging smoke, the volleying flames, the hostile faces all around, the pitying eye that lurked but here and there, until nature and imperishable truth broke loose from artificial restraints;—these might not be apparent through the mists of the hurrying future. But the voice that called her to death, *that* she heard for ever.

Great was the throne of France even in those days, and great was he that sat upon it: but well Joanna knew that not the throne, nor he that sat upon it, was for *her ;* but, on the contrary, that she was for *them ;* not she by them, but they by her, should rise from the dust. Gorgeous were the lilies of France, and for

[1] "*Those that share thy blood :*"—A collateral relative of Joanna's was subsequently ennobled by the title of *Du Lys.*

centuries had the privilege to spread their beauty over land and sea, until, in another century, the wrath of God and man combined to wither them; but well Joanna knew, early at Domrémy she had read that bitter truth, that the lilies of France would decorate no garland for *her*. Flower nor bud, bell nor blossom, would ever bloom for *her*.

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But stay. What reason is there for taking up this subject of Joanna precisely in the spring of 1847? Might it not have been left till the spring of 1947? or, perhaps, left till called for? Yes, but it *is* called for; and clamorously. You are aware, reader, that amongst the many original thinkers whom modern France has produced, one of the reputed leaders is M. Michelet. All these writers are of a revolutionary cast; not in a political sense merely, but in all senses; mad, oftentimes, as March hares; crazy with the laughing gas of recovered liberty; drunk with the wine-cup of their mighty revolution, snorting, whinnying, throwing up their heels, like wild horses in the boundless Pampas, and running races of defiance with snipes, or with the winds, or with their own shadows, if they can find nothing else to challenge. Some time or other I, that have leisure to read, may introduce *you*, that have not, to two or three dozen of these writers; of whom I can assure you beforehand, that they are often profound, and at intervals are even as impassioned as if they were come of our best English blood. But now, confining our attention to M. Michelet, we in England—who know him best by his worst book, the book against priests, etc.—know him disadvantageously. That book is a rhapsody of incoherence. But his *History of France* is quite another thing. A man, in whatsoever craft he sails, cannot stretch away out of sight when he is linked to the windings of the shore by towing-ropes of history. Facts, and the consequences of facts, draw the writer back to the falconer's lure from the giddiest heights of speculation. Here, therefore—in his *France*—if not always free from flightiness, if now and then off like a rocket for an airy wheel in the clouds, M. Michelet, with natural politeness, never forgets that he has left a large audience waiting for him on earth, and gazing upwards in anxiety for his return: return, therefore, he does. But history, though clear of certain temptations in one direction, has separate dangers of its own. It is impossible so to write a history of France, or of England—works becoming every hour more indispensable to the inevitably-political man of this day—without perilous openings for error.

If I, for instance, on the part of England, should happen to turn my labours into that channel, and (on the model of Lord Percy going to Chevy Chase)

> "A vow to God should make
> My pleasure in the Michelet woods
> Three summer days to take,"

probably, from simple delirium, I might hunt M. Michelet into *delirium tremens*. Two strong angels stand by the side of history, whether French history or English, as heraldic supporters: the angel of research on the left hand, that must read millions of dusty parchments, and of pages blotted with lies; the angel of meditation on the right hand, that must cleanse these lying records with fire, even as of old the draperies of *asbestos* were cleansed, and must quicken them into regenerated life. Willingly I acknowledge that no man will ever avoid innumerable errors of detail; with so vast a compass of ground to traverse, this is impossible; but such errors (though I have a bushel on hand, at M. Michelet's service) are not the game I chase; it is the bitter and unfair spirit in which M. Michelet writes against England. Even *that*, after all, is but my secondary object; the real one is Joanna, the Pucelle d'Orleans for herself.

I am not going to write the history of *La Pucelle:* to do this, or even circumstantially to report the history of her persecution and bitter death, of her struggle with false witnesses and with ensnaring judges, it would be necessary to have before us *all* the documents, and therefore the collection only now forthcoming [1] in Paris. But *my* purpose is narrower. There have been great thinkers, disdaining the careless judgments of contemporaries, who have thrown themselves boldly on the judgment of a far posterity, that should have had time to review, to ponder, to compare. There have been great actors on the stage of tragic humanity that might, with the same depth of confidence, have appealed from the levity of compatriot friends —too heartless for the sublime interest of their story, and too impatient for the labour of sifting its perplexities—to the magnanimity and justice of enemies. To this class belongs the Maid of Arc. The ancient Romans were too faithful to the ideal of grandeur in themselves not to relent, after a generation or two, before the grandeur of Hannibal. Mithridates—a more

[1] "*Only now forthcoming:*"—In 1847 *began* the publication (from official records) of Joanna's trial. It was interrupted, I fear, by the convulsions of 1848; and whether even yet finished, I do not know.

doubtful person—yet merely for the magic perseverance of his indomitable malice, won from the same Romans the only real honour that ever he received on earth. And we English have ever shown the same homage to stubborn enmity. To work unflinchingly for the ruin of England; to say through life, by word and by deed, *Delenda est Anglia Victrix!* that one purpose of malice, faithfully pursued, has quartered some people upon our national funds of homage as by a perpetual annuity. Better than an inheritance of service rendered to England herself, has sometimes proved the most insane hatred to England. Hyder Ali, even his son Tippoo, though so far inferior, and Napoleon, have all benefited by this disposition amongst ourselves to exaggerate the merit of diabolic enmity. Not one of these men was ever capable, in a solitary instance, of praising an enemy [what do you say to *that*, reader?], and yet, in *their* behalf, we consent to forget, not their crimes only, but (which is worse) their hideous bigotry and anti-magnanimous egotism—for nationality it was not. Suffrein, and some half-dozen of other French nautical heroes, because rightly they did us all the mischief they could (which was really great), are names justly reverenced in England. On the same principle, La Pucelle d'Orleans, the victorious enemy of England, has been destined to receive her deepest commemoration from the magnanimous justice of Englishmen.

Joanna, as we in England should call her, but, according to her own statement, Jeanne (or, as M. Michelet asserts, Jean [1]) D'Arc, was born at Domrémy, a village on the marches of Lorraine and Champagne, and dependent upon the town of Vaucouleurs. I have called her a Lorrainer, not simply because the word is prettier, but because Champagne too odiously reminds us English of what are for *us* imaginary wines, which, undoubtedly, *La Pucelle* tasted as rarely as we English; we

[1] "*Jean:*"—M. Michelet asserts that there was a mystical meaning at that era in calling a child *Jean;* it implied a secret commendation of a child, if not a dedication, to St. John the evangelist, the beloved disciple, the apostle of love and mysterious visions. But, really, as the name was so exceedingly common, few people will detect a mystery in calling a *boy* by the name of Jack, though it *does* seem mysterious to call a girl Jack. It may be less so in France, where a beautiful practice has always prevailed of giving to a boy his mother's name—preceded and strengthened by a male name, as *Charles Anne, Victor Victoire.* In cases where a mother's memory has been unusually dear to a son, this vocal memento of her, locked into the circle of his own name, gives to it the tenderness of a testamentary relique, or a funeral ring. I presume, therefore, that *La Pucelle* must have borne the baptismal names of Jeanne Jean; the latter with no reference, perhaps, to so sublime a person as St. John, but simply to some relative.

English, because the Champagne of London is chiefly grown in Devonshire; *La Pucelle*, because the Champagne of Champagne never, by any chance, flowed into the fountain of Domrémy, from which only she drank. M. Michelet will have her to be a *Champenoise*, and for no better reason than that she "took after her father," who happened to be a *Champenois*.

These disputes, however, turn on refinements too nice. Domrémy stood upon the frontiers, and, like other frontiers, produced a *mixed* race, representing the *cis* and the *trans*. A river (it is true) formed the boundary-line at this point—the river Meuse; and *that*, in old days, might have divided the populations; but in these days it did not: there were bridges, there were ferries and weddings crossed from the right bank to the left. Here lay two great roads, not so much for travellers that were few, as for armies that were too many by half. These two roads, one of which was the great high road between France and Germany, *decussated* at this very point; which is a learned way of saying that they formed a St. Andrew's cross, or letter X. I hope the compositor will choose a good large X, in which case the point of intersection, the *locus* of conflux and intersection for these four diverging arms, will finish the reader's geographical education, by showing him to a hair's-breadth where it was that Domrémy stood. These roads, so grandly situated, as great trunk arteries between two mighty realms,[1] and haunted for ever by wars or rumours of wars, decussated (for anything I know to the contrary) absolutely under Joanna's bedroom window; one rolling away to the right, past Monsieur D'Arc's old barn, and the other unaccountably preferring to sweep round that odious man's pig-sty to the left.

On whichever side of the border chance had thrown Joanna, the same love to France would have been nurtured. For it is a strange fact, noticed by M. Michelet and others, that the Dukes of Bar and Lorraine had for generations pursued the policy of eternal warfare with France on their own account, yet also of eternal amity and league with France, in case anybody else presumed to attack her. Let peace settle upon France, and before long you might rely upon seeing the little vixen Lorraine flying at the throat of France. Let France be assailed by a formidable enemy, and instantly you saw a Duke of Lorraine insisting on having his own throat cut in support of France;

[1] And reminding one of that inscription, so justly admired by Paul Richter, which a Russian Czarina placed on a guide-post near Moscow, *This is the road that leads to Constantinople.*

which favour accordingly was cheerfully granted to him in three great successive battles—twice by the English, viz., at Crécy and Agincourt, once by the Sultan at Nicopolis.

This sympathy with France during great eclipses, in those that during ordinary seasons were always teasing her with brawls and guerilla inroads, strengthened the natural piety to France of those that were confessedly the children of her own house. The outposts of France, as one may call the great frontier provinces, were of all localities the most devoted to the Fleurs de Lys. To witness, at any great crisis, the generous devotion to these lilies of the little fiery cousin that in gentler weather was for ever tilting at the breast of France, could not but fan the zeal of France's legitimate daughters: whilst to occupy a post of honour on the frontiers against an old hereditary enemy of France, would naturally stimulate this zeal by a sentiment of martial pride, by a sense of danger always threatening, and of hatred always smouldering. That great four-headed road was a perpetual memento to patriotic ardour. To say, this way lies the road to Paris, and that other way to Aix-la-Chapelle—this to Prague, that to Vienna—nourished the warfare of the heart by daily ministrations of sense. The eye that watched for the gleams of lance or helmet from the hostile frontier, the ear that listened for the groaning of wheels, made the high-road itself, with its relations to centres so remote, into a manual of patriotic duty.

The situation, therefore, *locally*, of Joanna was full of profound suggestions to a heart that listened for the stealthy steps of change and fear that too surely were in motion. But, if the place were grand, the time, the burden of the time, was far more so. The air overhead in its upper chambers was *hurtling* with the obscure sound; was dark with sullen fermenting of storms that had been gathering for a hundred and thirty years. The battle of Agincourt in Joanna's childhood had reopened the wounds of France. Crécy and Poictiers, those withering overthrows for the chivalry of France, had, before Agincourt occurred, been tranquillised by more than half a century; but this resurrection of their trumpet wails made the whole series of battles and endless skirmishes take their stations as parts in one drama. The graves that had closed sixty years ago seemed to fly open in sympathy with a sorrow that echoed their own. The monarchy of France laboured in extremity, rocked and reeled like a ship fighting with the darkness of monsoons. The madness of the poor king (Charles VI.) falling in at such a crisis,

like the case of women labouring in child-birth during the storming of a city, trebled the awfulness of the time. Even the wild story of the incident which had immediately occasioned the explosion of this madness—the case of a man unknown, gloomy, and perhaps maniacal himself, coming out of a forest at noonday, laying his hand upon the bridle of the king's horse, checking him for a moment to say, "Oh, king, thou art betrayed," and then vanishing, no man knew whither, as he had appeared for no man knew what—fell in with the universal prostration of mind that laid France on her knees, as before the slow unweaving of some ancient prophetic doom. The famines, the extraordinary diseases, the insurrections of the peasantry up and down Europe—these were chords struck from the same mysterious harp; but these were transitory chords. There had been others of deeper and more ominous sound. The termination of the Crusades, the destruction of the Templars, the Papal interdicts, the tragedies caused or suffered by the house of Anjou, and by the emperor—these were full of a more permanent significance. But, since then, the colossal figure of feudalism was seen standing, as it were, on tiptoe, at Crécy, for flight from earth: that was a revolution unparalleled; yet *that* was a trifle, by comparison with the more fearful revolutions that were mining below the church. By her own internal schisms, by the abominable spectacle of a double pope—so that no man, except through political bias, could even guess which was Heaven's vicegerent, and which the creature of hell—the church was rehearsing, as in still earlier forms she had already rehearsed, those vast rents in her foundations which no man should ever heal.

These were the loftiest peaks of the cloudland in the skies, that to the scientific gazer first caught the colours of the *new* morning in advance. But the whole vast range alike of sweeping glooms overhead, dwelt upon all meditative minds, even upon those that could not distinguish the tendencies nor decipher the forms. It was, therefore, not her own age alone, as affected by its immediate calamities, that lay with such weight upon Joanna's mind; but her own age, as one section in a vast mysterious drama, unweaving through a century back, and drawing nearer continually to some dreadful crisis. Cataracts and rapids were heard roaring ahead; and signs were seen far back, by help of old men's memories, which answered secretly to signs now coming forward on the eye, even as locks answer to keys. It was not wonderful that in such a haunted solitude,

with such a haunted heart, Joanna should see angelic visions, and hear angelic voices. These voices whispered to her for ever the duty, self-imposed, of delivering France. Five years she listened to these monitory voices with internal struggles. At length she could resist no longer. Doubt gave way; and she left her home for ever in order to present herself at the dauphin's court.

The education of this poor girl was mean according to the present standard: was ineffably grand, according to a purer philosophic standard: and only not good for our age, because for us it would be unattainable. She read nothing, for she could not read; but she had heard others read parts of the Roman martyrology. She wept in sympathy with the sad *Misereres* of the Romish Church; she rose to heaven with the glad triumphant *Te Deums* of Rome, she drew her comfort and her vital strength from the rites of the same church. But, next after these spiritual advantages, she owed most to the advantages of her situation. The fountain of Domrémy was on the brink of a boundless forest; and it was haunted to that degree by fairies, that the parish priest (*curé*) was obliged to read mass there once a year, in order to keep them in any decent bounds. Fairies are important, even in a statistical view: certain weeds mark poverty in the soil, fairies mark its solitude. As surely as the wolf retires before cities, does the fairy sequester herself from the haunts of the licensed victualler. A village is too much for her nervous delicacy: at most, she can tolerate a distant view of a hamlet. We may judge, therefore, by the uneasiness and extra trouble which they gave to the parson, in what strength the fairies mustered at Domrémy; and, by a satisfactory consequence, how thinly sown with men and women must have been that region even in its inhabited spots. But the forests of Domrémy—those were the glories of the land: for in them abode mysterious powers and ancient secrets that towered into tragic strength. "Abbeys there were, and abbey windows"—"like Moorish temples of the Hindoos," that exercised even princely power both in Lorraine and in the German Diets. These had their sweet bells that pierced the forests for many a league at matins and vespers, and each its own dreamy legend. Few enough, and scattered enough, were these abbeys, so as in no degree to disturb the deep solitude of the region; yet many enough to spread a network or awning of Christian sanctity over what else might have seemed a heathen wilderness. This sort of religious talisman being secured, a man the most afraid

of ghosts (like myself, suppose, or the reader) becomes armed into courage to wander for days in their sylvan recesses. The mountains of the Vosges, on the eastern frontier of France, have never attracted much notice from Europe, except in 1813-14 for a few brief months, when they fell within Napoleon's line of defence against the Allies. But they are interesting for this, amongst other features, that they do not, like some loftier ranges, repel woods: the forests and the hills are on sociable terms. *Live and let live*, is their motto. For this reason, in part, these tracts in Lorraine were a favourite hunting-ground with the Carlovingian princes. About six hundred years before Joanna's childhood, Charlemagne was known to have hunted there. That, of itself, was a grand incident in the traditions of a forest or a chase. In these vast forests, also, were to be found (if anywhere to be found) those mysterious fawns that tempted solitary hunters into visionary and perilous pursuits. Here was seen (if anywhere seen) that ancient stag who was already nine hundred years old, but possibly a hundred or two more, when met by Charlemagne; and the thing was put beyond doubt by the inscription upon his golden collar. I believe Charlemagne knighted the stag; and, if ever he is met again by a king, he ought to be made an earl; or, being upon the marches of France, a marquis. Observe, I don't absolutely vouch for all these things: my own opinion varies. On a fine breezy forenoon I am audaciously sceptical; but as twilight sets in, my credulity grows steadily, till it becomes equal to anything that could be desired. And I have heard candid sportsmen declare that, outside of these very forests, they laughed loudly at all the dim tales connected with their haunted solitudes; but, on reaching a spot notoriously eighteen miles deep within them, they agreed with Sir Roger de Coverly, that a good deal might be said on both sides.

Such traditions, or any others that (like the stag) connect distant generations with each other, are, for that cause, sublime; and the sense of the shadowy, connected with such appearances that reveal themselves or not, according to circumstances, leaves a colouring of sanctity over ancient forests, even in those minds that utterly reject the legend as a fact.

But, apart from all distinct stories of that order, in any solitary frontier between two great empires, as here, for instance, or in the desert between Syria and the Euphrates, there is an inevitable tendency, in minds of any deep sensibility, to people the solitudes with phantom images of powers that were of old

so vast. Joanna, therefore, in her quiet occupation of a shepherdess, would be led continually to brood over the political condition of her country, by the traditions of the past no less than by the mementoes of the local present.

M. Michelet, indeed, says that La Pucelle was *not* a shepherdess. I beg his pardon: she *was*. What he rests upon I guess pretty well: it is the evidence of a woman called Haumette, the most confidential friend of Joanna. Now, she is a good witness, and a good girl, and I like her; for she makes a natural and affectionate report of Joanna's ordinary life. But still, however good she may be as a witness, Joanna is better; and she, when speaking to the dauphin, calls herself in the Latin report *Bergereta*. Even Haumette confesses that Joanna tended sheep in her girlhood. And I believe, that if Miss Haumette were taking coffee alone with me this very evening (February 12, 1847)—in which there would be no subject for scandal or for maiden blushes, because I am an intense philosopher, and Miss H. would be hard upon four hundred and fifty years old—she would admit the following comment upon her evidence to be right. A Frenchman, about forty years ago, M. Simond, in his *Travels*, mentions accidentally the following hideous scene as one steadily observed and watched by himself in chivalrous France, not very long before the French Revolution:—A peasant was ploughing; and the team that drew his plough was a donkey and a woman. Both were regularly harnessed: both pulled alike. This is bad enough; but the Frenchman adds, that, in distributing his lashes, the peasant was obviously desirous of being impartial; or, if either of the yoke-fellows had a right to complain, certainly it was not the donkey. Now, in any country where such degradation of females could be tolerated by the state of manners, a woman of delicacy would shrink from acknowledging, either for herself or her friend, that she had ever been addicted to any mode of labour not strictly domestic; because, if once owning herself a prædial servant, she would be sensible that this confession extended by probability in the hearer's thoughts to the having incurred indignities of this horrible kind. Haumette clearly thinks it more dignified for Joanna to have been darning the stockings of her horny-hoofed father, Monsieur D'Arc, than keeping sheep, lest she might then be suspected of having ever done something worse. But, luckily, there was no danger of *that:* Joanna never was in service; and my opinion is, that her father should have mended his own stockings, since probably he was the party to

make the holes in them, as many a better man than D'Arc does; meaning by *that* not myself, because, though probably a better man than D'Arc, I protest against doing anything of the kind. If I lived even with Friday in Juan Fernandez, either Friday must do all the darning, or else it must go undone. The better men that I meant were the sailors in the British navy, every man of whom mends his own stockings. Who else is to do it? Do you suppose, reader, that the junior lords of the admiralty are under articles to darn for the navy?

The reason, meantime, for my systematic hatred of D'Arc is this. There was a story current in France before the Revolution, framed to ridicule the pauper aristocracy, who happened to have long pedigrees and short rent rolls; viz., that a head of such a house, dating from the Crusades, was overheard saying to his son, a Chevalier of St. Louis, "*Chevalier, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?*" Now, it is clearly made out by the surviving evidence, that D'Arc would much have preferred continuing to say, "*Ma fille as-tu donné au cochon à manger?*" to saying, "*Pucelle d'Orleans, as-tu sauvé les fleurs-de-lys?*" There is an old English copy of verses which argues thus:—

> "If the man that turnips cries,
> Cry not when his father dies,
> Then 'tis plain the man had rather
> Have a turnip than his father."

I cannot say that the logic of these verses was ever *entirely* to my satisfaction. I do not see my way through it as clearly as could be wished. But I see my way most clearly through D'Arc; and the result is—that he would greatly have preferred not merely a turnip to his father, but the saving a pound or so of bacon to saving the Oriflamme of France.

It is probable (as M. Michelet suggests) that the title of Virgin, or *Pucelle*, had in itself, and apart from the miraculous stories about her, a secret power over the rude soldiery and partisan chiefs of that period; for, in such a person, they saw a representative manifestation of the Virgin Mary, who, in a course of centuries, had grown steadily upon the popular heart.

As to Joanna's supernatural detection of the dauphin (Charles VII.) amongst three hundred lords and knights, I am surprised at the credulity which could ever lend itself to that theatrical juggle. Who admires more than myself the sublime enthusiasm, the rapturous faith in herself, of this pure creature? But I am far from admiring stage artifices, which not *La Pucelle*, but the court, must have arranged; nor can surrender myself to the

conjurer's *legerdemain*, such as may be seen every day for a shilling. Southey's *Joan of Arc* was published in 1796. Twenty years after, talking with Southey, I was surprised to find him still owning a secret bias in favour of Joan, founded on her detection of the dauphin. The story, for the benefit of the reader new to the case, was this:—*La Pucelle* was first made known to the dauphin, and presented to his court, at Chinon: and here came her first trial. By way of testing her supernatural pretensions, she was to find out the royal personage amongst the whole ark of clean and unclean creatures. Failing in this *coup d'essai*, she would not simply disappoint many a beating heart in the glittering crowd that on different motives yearned for her success, but she would ruin herself—and, as the oracle within had told her, would, by ruining herself, ruin France. Our own sovereign lady Victoria rehearses annually a trial not so severe in degree, but the same in kind. She "pricks" for sheriffs. Joanna pricked for a king. But observe the difference: our own lady pricks for two men out of three; Joanna for one man out of three hundred. Happy Lady of the islands and the orient!—she *can* go astray in her choice only by one-half; to the extent of one-half she *must* have the satisfaction of being right. And yet, even with these tight limits to the misery of a boundless discretion, permit me, liege lady, with all loyalty, to submit—that now and then you prick with your pin the wrong man. But the poor child from Domrémy, shrinking under the gaze of a dazzling court—not *because* dazzling (for in visions she had seen those that were more so), but because some of them wore a scoffing smile on their features—how should *she* throw her line into so deep a river to angle for a king, where many a gay creature was sporting that masqueraded as kings in dress! Nay, even more than any true king would have done; for, in Southey's version of the story, the dauphin says, by way of trying the virgin's magnetic sympathy with royalty,

> "On the throne,
> I the while mingling with the menial throng,
> Some courtier shall be seated."

This usurper is even crowned: "the jewelled crown shines on a menial's head." But really, that is "*un peu fort;*" and the mob of spectators might raise a scruple whether our friend the jackdaw upon the throne, and the dauphin himself, were not grazing the shins of treason. For the dauphin could not lend more than belonged to him. According to the popular notion,

he had no crown for himself; consequently none to lend, on any pretence whatever, until the consecrated Maid should take him to Rheims. This was the *popular* notion in France. But certainly it was the dauphin's interest to support the popular notion, as he meant to use the services of Joanna. For, if he were king already, what was it that she could do for him beyond Orleans? That is to say, what more than a merely *military* service could she render him? And, above all, if he were king without a coronation, and without the oil from the sacred ampulla, what advantage was yet open to him by celerity above his competitor, the English boy? Now was to be a race for the coronation: he that should win *that* race carried the superstition of France along with him: he that should first be drawn from the ovens of Rheims, was under that superstition baked into a king.

La Pucelle, before she could be allowed to practise as a warrior, was put through her manual and platoon exercise, as a pupil in divinity, at the bar of six eminent men in wigs. According to Southey (v. 393, Book III., in the original edition of his *Joan of Arc*), she "appalled the doctors." It's not easy to do *that:* but they had some reason to feel bothered, as that surgeon would assuredly feel bothered, who, upon proceeding to dissect a subject, should find the subject retaliating as a dissecter upon himself, especially if Joanna ever made the speech to them which occupies v. 354-391, B. III. It is a double impossibility; first, because a piracy from Tindal's *Christianity as old as the Creation*—a piracy *à parte ante*, and by three centuries; secondly, it is quite contrary to the evidence on Joanna's trial. Southey's *Joan* of A.D. 1796 (Cottle, Bristol) tells the doctors, amongst other secrets, that she never in her life attended—first, mass; nor second, the sacramental table; nor third, confession. In the meantime, all this deistical confession of Joanna's, besides being suicidal for the interest of her cause, is opposed to the depositions upon *both* trials. The very best witness called from first to last deposes that Joanna attended these rites of her church even too often; was taxed with doing so; and, by blushing, owned the charge as a fact, though certainly not as a fault. Joanna was a girl of natural piety, that saw God in forests, and hills, and fountains; but did not the less seek him in chapels and consecrated oratories.

This peasant girl was self-educated through her own natural meditativeness. If the reader turns to that divine passage in *Paradise Regained*, which Milton has put into the mouth of our

Saviour when first entering the wilderness, and musing upon the tendency of those great impulses growing within himself—

> "Oh, what a multitude of thoughts at once
> Awaken'd in me swarm, while I consider
> What from within I feel myself, and hear
> What from without comes often to my ears,
> Ill sorting with my present state compared!
> When I was yet a child, no childish play
> To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
> Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
> What might be public good; myself I thought
> Born to that end"—

he will have some notion of the vast reveries which brooded over the heart of Joanna in early girlhood, when the wings were budding that should carry her from Orleans to Rheims; when the golden chariot was dimly revealing itself, that should carry her from the kingdom of *France Delivered* to the eternal kingdom.

It is not requisite, for the honour of Joanna, nor is there, in this place, room, to pursue her brief career of *action*. That, though wonderful, forms the earthly part of her story: the spiritual part is the saintly passion of her imprisonment, trial, and execution. It is unfortunate, therefore, for Southey's *Joan of Arc* (which, however, should always be regarded as a *juvenile* effort), that, precisely when her real glory begins, the poem ends. But this limitation of the interest grew, no doubt, from the constraint inseparably attached to the law of epic unity. Joanna's history bisects into two opposite hemispheres, and both could not have been presented to the eye in one poem, unless by sacrificing all unity of theme, or else by involving the earlier half, as a narrative episode, in the latter; which, however, might have been done, for it might have been communicated to a fellow-prisoner, or a confessor, by Joanna herself. It is sufficient, as concerns *this* section of Joanna's life, to say that she fulfilled, to the height of her promises, the restoration of the prostrate throne. France had become a province of England; and for the ruin of both, if such a yoke could be maintained. Dreadful pecuniary exhaustion caused the English energy to droop; and that critical opening *La Pucelle* used with a corresponding felicity of audacity and suddenness (that were in themselves portentous) for introducing the wedge of French native resources, for rekindling the national pride, and for planting the dauphin once more upon his feet. When Joanna appeared, he had been on the point of giving up the struggle with the English, distressed as they were, and of flying to the south of France. She taught him to blush for such abject

counsels. She liberated Orleans, that great city, so decisive by its fate for the issue of the war, and then beleaguered by the English with an elaborate application of engineering skill unprecedented in Europe. Entering the city after sunset, on the 29th of April, she sang mass on Sunday, May 8, for the entire disappearance of the besieging force. On the 29th of June, she fought and gained over the English the decisive battle of Patay; on the 9th of July, she took Troyes by a coup-de-main from a mixed garrison of English and Burgundians; on the 15th of that month, she carried the dauphin into Rheims; on Sunday the 17th, she crowned him; and there she rested from her labour of triumph. All that was to be *done*, she had now accomplished: what remained was—to *suffer*.

All this forward movement was her own: excepting one man, the whole council was against her. Her enemies were all that drew power from earth. Her supporters were her own strong enthusiasm, and the headlong contagion by which she carried this sublime frenzy into the hearts of women, of soldiers, and of all who lived by labour. Henceforward she was thwarted; and the worst error that she committed was, to lend the sanction of her presence to counsels which she had ceased to approve. But she had now accomplished the capital objects which her own visions had dictated. These involved all the rest. Errors were now less important; and doubtless it had now become more difficult for herself to pronounce authentically what *were* errors. The noble girl had achieved, as by a rapture of motion, the capital end of clearing out a free space around her sovereign, giving him the power to move his arms with effect; and, secondly the inappreciable end of winning for that sovereign what seemed to all France the heavenly ratification of his rights, by crowning him with the ancient solemnities. She had made it impossible for the English now to step before her. They were caught in an irretrievable blunder, owing partly to discord amongst the uncles of Henry VI., partly to a want of funds, but partly to the very impossibility which they believed to press with tenfold force upon any French attempt to forestall theirs. They laughed at such a thought; and whilst they laughed, she *did* it. Henceforth the single redress for the English of this capital oversight, but which never *could* have redressed it effectually, was to vitiate and taint the coronation of Charles VII. as the work of a witch. That policy, and not malice (as M. Michelet is so happy to believe), was the moving principle in the subsequent prosecution of Joanna. Unless they unhinged the force of the

first coronation in the popular mind, by associating it with power given from hell, they felt that the sceptre of the invader was broken.

But she, the child that, at nineteen, had wrought wonders so great for France, was she not elated? Did she not lose, as men so often *have* lost, all sobriety of mind when standing upon the pinnacle of success so giddy? Let her enemies declare. During the progress of her movement, and in the centre of ferocious struggles, she had manifested the temper of her feelings, by the pity which she had everywhere expressed for the suffering enemy. She forwarded to the English leaders a touching invitation to unite with the French, as brothers, in a common crusade against infidels, thus opening the road for a soldierly retreat. She interposed to protect the captive or the wounded —she mourned over the excesses of her countrymen—she threw herself off her horse to kneel by the dying English soldier, and to comfort him with ministrations, physical or spiritual, as his situation allowed. "Nolebat," says the evidence, "uti ense suo, aut quemquam interficere." She sheltered the English that invoked her aid, in her own quarters. She wept as she beheld, stretched on the field of battle, so many brave enemies that had died without confession. And, as regarded herself, her elation expressed itself thus:—On the day when she had finished her work, she wept; for she knew that, when her *triumphal* task was done, her end must be approaching. Her aspirations pointed only to a place, which seemed to her more than usually full of natural piety, as one in which it would give her pleausre to die. And she uttered, between smiles and tears, as a wish that inexpressibly fascinated her heart, and yet was half-fantastic, a broken prayer that God would return her to the solitudes from which he had drawn her, and suffer her to become a shepherdess once more. It was a natural prayer, because nature has laid a necessity upon every human heart to seek for rest, and to shrink from torment. Yet, again, it was a half-fantastic prayer, because, from childhood upwards, visions that she had no power to mistrust, and the voices which sounded in her ear for ever, had long since persuaded her mind, that for *her* no such prayer could be granted. Too well she felt that her mission must be worked out to the end, and that the end was now at hand. All went wrong from this time. She herself had created the *funds* out of which the French restoration should grow; but she was not suffered to witness their development, or their prosperous application. More than one

military plan was entered upon which she did not approve. But she still continued to expose her person as before. Severe wounds had not taught her caution. And at length, in a sortie from Compeigne (whether through treacherous collusion on the part of her own friends is doubtful to this day), she was made prisoner by the Burgundians, and finally surrendered to the English.

Now came her trial. This trial, moving of course under English influence, was conducted in chief by the Bishop of Beauvais. He was a Frenchman, sold to English interests, and hoping, by favour of the English leaders, to reach the highest preferment. *Bishop that art, Archbishop that shalt be, Cardinal that mayest be,* were the words that sounded continually in his ear; and doubtless a whisper of visions still higher, of a triple crown, and feet upon the necks of kings, sometimes stole into his heart. M. Michelet is anxious to keep us in mind that this bishop was but an agent of the English. True. But it does not better the case for his countryman—that, being an accomplice in the crime, making himself the leader in the persecution against the helpless girl, he was willing to be all this in the spirit, and with the conscious vileness of a cat's-paw. Never from the foundations of the earth was there such a trial as this, if it were laid open in all its beauty of defence, and all its hellishness of attack. Oh, child of France! shepherdess, peasant girl! trodden under foot by all around thee, how I honour thy flashing intellect, quick as God's lightning, and true as God's lightning to its mark, that ran before France and laggard Europe, by many a century, confounding the malice of the ensnarer, and making dumb the oracles of falsehood! Is it not scandalous, is it not humiliating to civilisation, that, even at this day, France exhibits the horrid spectacle of judges examining the prisoner against himself; seducing him, by fraud, into treacherous conclusions against his own head; using the terrors of their power for extorting confessions from the frailty of hope; nay (which is worse), using the blandishments of condescension and snaky kindness for thawing into compliances of gratitude those whom they had failed to freeze into terror? Wicked judges! Barbarian jurisprudence! that, sitting in your own conceit on the summits of social wisdom, have yet failed to learn the first principles of criminal justice; sit ye humbly and with docility at the feet of this girl from Domrémy, that tore your webs of cruelty into shreds and dust. "Would you examine me as a witness against myself?" was the question by which many

times she defied their arts. Continually she showed that their interrogations were irrelevant to any business before the court, or that entered into the ridiculous charges against her. General questions were proposed to her on points of casuistical divinity; two-edged questions, which not one of themselves could have answered, without, on the one side, landing himself in heresy (as then interpreted), or, on the other, in some presumptuous expression of self-esteem. Next came a wretched Dominican, that pressed her with an objection, which, if applied to the Bible, would tax every one of its miracles with unsoundness. The monk had the excuse of never having read the Bible. M. Michelet has no such excuse; and it makes one blush for him, as a philosopher, to find him describing such an argument as "weighty," whereas it is but a varied expression of rude Mahometan metaphysics. Her answer to this, if there were room to place the whole in a clear light, was as shattering as it was rapid. Another thought to entrap her by asking what language the angelic visitors of her solitude had talked; as though heavenly counsels could want polyglot interpreters for every word, or that God needed language at all in whispering thoughts to a human heart. Then came a worse devil, who asked her whether the archangel Michael had appeared naked. Not comprehending the vile insinuation, Joanna, whose poverty suggested to her simplicity that it might be the *costliness* of suitable robes which caused the demur, asked them if they fancied God, who clothed the flowers of the valleys, unable to find raiment for his servants. The answer of Joanna moves a smile of tenderness, but the disappointment of her judges makes one laugh exultingly. Others succeeded by troops, who upbraided her with leaving her father; as if that greater Father, whom she believed herself to have been serving, did not retain the power of dispensing with his own rules, or had not said, that for a less cause than martyrdom, man and woman should leave both father and mother.

On Easter Sunday, when the trial had been long proceeding, the poor girl fell so ill as to cause a belief that she had been poisoned. It was not poison. Nobody had any interest in hastening a death so certain. M. Michelet, whose sympathies with all feelings are so quick, that one would gladly see them always as justly directed, reads the case most truly. Joanna had a two-fold malady. She was visited by a paroxysm of the complaint called *home-sickness;* the cruel nature of her imprisonment, and its length, could not but point her solitary thoughts,

in darkness and in chains (for chained she was), to Domrémy. And the season, which was the most heavenly period of the spring, added stings to this yearning. That was one of her maladies—*nostalgia*, as medicine calls it; the other was weariness and exhaustion from daily combats with malice. She saw that everybody hated her, and thirsted for her blood; nay, many kind-hearted creatures that would have pitied her profoundly, as regarded all political charges, had their natural feelings warped by the belief that she had dealings with fiendish powers. She knew she was to die; that was *not* the misery; the misery was, that this consummation could not be reached without so much intermediate strife, as if she were contending for some chance (where chance was none) of happiness, or were dreaming for a moment of escaping the inevitable. Why, then, *did* she contend? Knowing that she would reap nothing from answering her persecutors, why did she not retire by silence from the superfluous contest? It was because her quick and eager loyalty to truth would not suffer her to see it darkened by frauds, which *she* could expose, but others, even of candid listeners, perhaps, could not; it was through that imperishable grandeur of soul, which taught her to submit meekly and without a struggle to her punishment, but taught her *not* to submit —no, not for a moment—to calumny as to facts, or to misconstruction as to motives. Besides, there were secretaries all around the court taking down her words. That was meant for no good to *her*. But the end does not always correspond to the meaning. And Joanna might say to herself—these words that will be used against me to-morrow and the next day, perhaps in some nobler generation may rise again for my justification. Yes, Joanna, they *are* rising even now in Paris, and for more than justification.

Woman, sister—there are some things which you do not execute as well as your brother, man; no, nor ever will. Pardon me, if I doubt whether you will ever produce a great poet from your choirs, or a Mozart, or a Phidias, or a Michael Angelo, or a great philosopher, or a great scholar. By which last is meant —not one who depends simply on an infinite memory, but also on an infinite and electrical power of combination; bringing together from the four winds, like the angel of the resurrection, what else were dust from dead men's bones, into the unity of breathing life. If you *can* create yourselves into any of these great creators, why have you not?

Yet, sister woman, though I cannot consent to find a Mozart

or a Michael Angelo in your sex, cheerfully, and with the love that burns in depths of admiration, I acknowledge that you can do one thing as well as the best of us men—a greater thing than even Milton is known to have done, or Michael Angelo—you can die grandly, and as goddesses would die, were goddesses mortal. If any distant worlds (which *may* be the case) are so far ahead of us Tellurians in optical resources, as to see distinctly through their telescopes all that we do on earth, what is the grandest sight to which we ever treat them? St. Peter's at Rome, do you fancy, on Easter Sunday, or Luxor, or perhaps the Himalayas? Oh no! my friend: suggest something better; these are baubles to *them;* they see in other worlds, in their own, far better toys of the same kind. These, take my word for it, are nothing. Do you give it up? The finest thing, then, we have to show them is a scaffold on the morning of execution. I assure you there is a strong muster in those far telescopic worlds, on any such morning, of those who happen to find themselves occupying the right hemisphere for a peep at *us*. How, then, if it be announced in some such telescopic world by those who make a livelihood of catching glimpses at our newspapers, whose language they have long since deciphered, that the poor victim in the morning's sacrifice is a woman? How, if it be published in that distant world, that the sufferer wears upon her head, in the eyes of many, the garlands of martyrdom? How, if it should be some Marie Antoinette, the widowed queen, coming forward on the scaffold, and presenting to the morning air her head, turned grey by sorrow, daughter of Cæsars kneeling down humbly to kiss the guillotine, as one that worships death? How, if it were the noble Charlotte Corday, that in the bloom of youth, that with the loveliest of persons, that with homage waiting upon her smiles wherever she turned her face to scatter them—homage that followed those smiles as surely as the carols of birds, after showers in spring, follow the reappearing sun and the racing of sunbeams over the hills—yet thought all these things cheaper than the dust upon her sandals, in comparison of deliverance from hell for her dear suffering France! Ah! these were spectacles indeed for those sympathising people in distant worlds; and some, perhaps, would suffer a sort of martyrdom themselves, because they could not testify their wrath, could not bear witness to the strength of love and to the fury of hatred that burned within them at such scenes; could not gather into golden urns some of that glorious dust which rested in the catacombs of earth.

On the Wednesday after Trinity Sunday in 1431, being then about nineteen years of age, the Maid of Arc underwent her martyrdom. She was conducted before mid-day, guarded by eight hundred spearmen, to a platform of prodigious height, constructed of wooden billets supported by occasional walls of lath and plaster, and traversed by hollow spaces in every direction for the creation of air-currents. The pile "struck terror," says M. Michelet, "by its height;" and, as usual, the English purpose in this is viewed as one of pure malignity. But there are two ways of explaining all that. It is probable that the purpose was merciful. On the circumstances of the execution I shall not linger. Yet, to mark the almost fatal felicity of M. Michelet in finding out whatever may injure the English name, at a moment when every reader will be interested in Joanna's personal appearance, it is really edifying to notice the ingenuity by which he draws into light from a dark corner a very unjust account of it, and neglects, though lying upon the high-road, a very pleasing one. Both are from English pens. Grafton, a chronicler, but little read, being a stiffnecked John Bull, thought fit to say, that no wonder Joanna should be a virgin, since her "foule face" was a satisfactory solution of that particular merit. Holinshead, on the other hand, a chronicler somewhat later, every way more important, and at one time universally read, has given a very pleasing testimony to the interesting character of Joanna's person and engaging manners. Neither of these men lived till the following century, so that personally this evidence is none at all. Grafton sullenly and carelessly believed as he wished to believe; Holinshead took pains to inquire, and reports undoubtedly the general impression of France. But I cite the case as illustrating M. Michelet's candour.[1]

[1] Amongst the many ebullitions of M. Michelet's fury against us poor English, are four which will be likely to amuse the reader; and they are the more conspicuous in collision with the justice which he sometimes does us, and the very indignant admiration which, under some aspects, he grants to us.

1. Our English literature he admires with some gnashing of teeth. He pronounces it "fine and sombre," but, I lament to add, "sceptical, Judaic, Satanic—in a word, antichristian." That Lord Byron should figure as a member of this diabolical corporation, will not surprise men. It *will* surprise them to hear that Milton is one of its Satanic leaders. Many are the generous and eloquent Frenchmen, besides Chateaubriand, who have, in the course of the last thirty years, nobly suspended their own burning nationality, in order to render a more rapturous homage at the feet of Milton; and some of them have raised Milton almost to a level with angelic natures. Not one of them has thought of looking for him *below* the earth. As to Shakspeare, M. Michelet detects in him a most extraor-

The circumstantial incidents of the execution, unless with more space than I can now command, I should be unwilling to relate. I should fear to injure, by imperfect report, a martyrdom which to myself appears so unspeakably grand. Yet for a purpose, pointing not at Joanna, but at M. Michelet—viz., to convince him that an Englishman is capable of thinking more highly of *La Pucelle* than even her admiring countrymen—I shall, in parting, allude to one or two traits in Joanna's demeanour on the scaffold, and to one or two in that of the bystanders, which authorise me in questioning an opinion of his upon this martyr's firmness. The reader ought to be reminded that Joanna D'Arc was subjected to an unusually unfair trial of opinion. Any of the elder Christian martyrs had not much to fear of *personal* rancour. The martyr was chiefly regarded

dinary mare's nest. It is this: he does "not recollect to have seen the name of God" in any part of his works. On reading such words, it is natural to rub one's eyes, and suspect that all one has ever seen in this world may have been a pure ocular delusion. In particular, I begin myself to suspect that the word "*la gloire*" never occurs in any Parisian journal. "The great English nation," says M. Michelet, "has one immense profound vice," to wit, "pride." Why, really that may be true; but we have a neighbour not absolutely clear of an "immense profound vice," as like ours in colour and shape as cherry to cherry. In short, M. Michelet thinks us, by fits and starts, admirable, only that we are detestable; and he would adore some of our authors, were it not that so intensely he could have wished to kick them.

2. M. Michelet thinks to lodge an arrow in our sides by a very odd remark upon Thomas à Kempis: which is, that a man of any conceivable European blood—a Finlander, suppose, or a Zantiote—might have written Tom; only not an Englishman. Whether an Englishman could have forged Tom must remain a matter of doubt, unless the thing had been tried long ago. That problem was intercepted for ever by Tom's perverseness in choosing to manufacture himself. Yet, since nobody is better aware than M. Michelet that this very point of Kempis *having* manufactured Kempis is furiously and hopelessly litigated, three or four nations claiming to have forged his work for him, the shocking old doubt will raise its snaky head once more—whether this forger, who rests in so much darkness, might not, after all, be of English blood. Tom, it may be feared, is known to modern English literature chiefly by an irreverent mention of his name in a line of Peter Pindar's (Dr. Wolcot) fifty years back, where he is described as

"Kempis Tom,
Who clearly shows the way to Kingdom Come."

Few in these days can have read him, unless in the Methodist version of John Wesley. Amongst those few, however, happens to be myself; which arose from the accident of having, when a boy of eleven, received a copy of the *De Imitatione Christi*, as a bequest from a relation, who died very young; from which cause, and from the external prettiness of the book, being a Glasgow reprint, by the celebrated Foulis, and gaily bound, I was induced to look into it; and finally read it many times over, partly out of some sympathy which, even in those days, I had with its simplicity and devotional fervour; but much more from the savage delight I found in laughing at Tom's Latinity. *That*, I freely grant to M. Michelet, is

as the enemy of Cæsar; at times, also, where any knowledge of the Christian faith and morals existed, with the enmity that arises spontaneously in the worldly against the spiritual. But the martyr, though disloyal, was not supposed to be, therefore, anti-national; and still less was *individually* hateful. What was hated (if anything) belonged to his class, not to himself separately. Now, Joanna, if hated at all, was hated personally, and in Rouen on national grounds. Hence there would be a certainty of calumny arising against *her*, such as would not affect martyrs in general. That being the case, it would follow of necessity that some people would impute to her a willingness to recant. No innocence could escape *that*. Now, had she really testified this willingness on the scaffold, it would have argued nothing at all but the weakness of a genial nature shrinking from the

inimitable. Yet, after all, it is not certain whether the original *was* Latin. But, however *that* may have been, if it is possible that M. Michelet [1] can be accurate in saying that there are no less than *sixty* French versions (not editions, observe, but separate versions) existing of the *De Imitatione*, how prodigious must have been the adaptation of the book to the religious heart of the fifteenth century! Excepting the Bible, but excepting *that* only, in Protestant lands, no book known to man has had the same distinction. It is the most marvellous bibliographical fact on record.

3. Our English girls, it seems, are as faulty in one way as we English males in another. None of us men could have written the *Opera Omnia* of Mr. à Kempis; neither could any of our girls have assumed male attire like *La Pucelle*. But why? Because, says Michelet, English girls and German think so much of an indecorum. Well, that is a good fault, generally speaking. But M. Michelet ought to have remembered a fact in the martyrologies which justifies both parties—the French heroine for doing, and the general choir of English girls for *not* doing. A female saint, specially renowned in France, had, for a reason as weighty as Joanna's—viz. expressly to shield her modesty amongst men—worn a male military harness. That reason and that example authorised *La Pucelle;* but our English girls, as a body, have seldom any such reason, and certainly no such saintly example, to plead. This excuses *them*. Yet, still, if it is indispensable to the national character that our young women should now and then trespass over the frontier of decorum, it then becomes a patriotic duty in me to assure M. Michelet that we have such ardent females amongst us, and in a long series—some detected in naval hospitals, when too sick to remember their disguise; some on fields of battle; multitudes never detected at all; some only suspected; and others discharged without noise

[1] "*If M. Michelet can be accurate:*"—However, on consideration, this statement does not depend on Michelet. The bibliographer Barbier has absolutely *specified* sixty in a separate dissertation, *soixante traductions*, amongst those even that have not escaped the search. The Italian translations are said to be thirty. As to mere *editions*, not counting the early MSS. for half a century before printing was introduced, those in Latin amount to two thousand, and those in French to one thousand. Meantime, it is very clear to me that this astonishing popularity, so entirely unparalleled in literature, could not have existed except in Roman Catholic times, nor subsequently have lingered in any Protestant land. It was the denial of Scripture fountains to thirsty lands which made this slender rill of Scripture truth so passionately welcome.

instant approach of torment. And those will often pity that weakness most, who, in their own persons, would yield to it least. Meantime, there never was a calumny uttered that drew less support from the recorded circumstances. It rests upon no *positive* testimony, and it has a weight of contradicting testimony to stem. And yet, strange to say, M. Michelet, who at times seems to admire the Maid of Arc as much as I do, is the one sole writer amongst her *friends* who lends some countenance to this odious slander. His words are, that, if she did not utter this word *recant* with her lips, she uttered it in her heart. "Whether she *said* the word is uncertain: but I affirm that she *thought* it."

Now, I affirm that she did not; not in any sense of the word "*thought*" applicable to the case. Here is France calumniating *La Pucelle:* here is England defending her. M. Michelet can only mean that, on *à priori* principles, every woman must be

by war offices and other absurd people. In our navy, both royal and commercial, and generally from deep remembrances of slighted love, women have sometimes served in disguise for many years, taking contentedly their daily allowance of burgoo, biscuit, or cannon-balls—anything, in short, digestible or indigestible, that it might please Providence to send. One thing, at least, is to their credit: never any of these poor masks, with their deep silent remembrances, have been detected through murmuring, or what is nautically understood by "skulking." So, for once, M. Michelet has an *erratum* to enter upon the fly-leaf of his book in presentation copies.

4. But the last of these ebullitions is the most lively. We English, at Orleans, and after Orleans (which is not quite so extraordinary, if all were told), fled before the Maid of Arc. Yes, says M. Michelet, you *did:* deny it, if you can. Deny it, *mon cher?* I don't mean to deny it. Running away, in many cases, is a thing so excellent, that no philosopher would, at times, condescend to adopt any other step. All of us nations in Europe, without one exception, have shown our philosophy in that way at times. Even people, "*qui ne se rendent pas*," have deigned both to run and to shout, "*Suave qui peut!*" at odd times of sunset; though, for my part, I have no pleasure in recalling unpleasant remembrances to brave men; and yet, really, being so philosophic, they ought *not* to be unpleasant. But the amusing feature in M. Michelet's reproach is the way in which he *improves* and varies against us the charge of running, as if he were singing a catch. Listen to him. They "*showed their backs*," did these English. (Hip, hip, hurrah! three times three!) "*Behind good walls they let themselves be taken.*" (Hip, hip! nine times nine!) They "*ran as fast as their legs could carry them.*" (Hurrah! twenty-seven times twenty-seven!) They "*ran before a girl;*" they did. (Hurrah! eighty-one times eighty-one!) This reminds one of criminal indictments on the old model in English courts, where (for fear the prisoner should escape) the crown lawyer varied the charge perhaps through forty counts. The law laid its guns so as to rake the accused at every possible angle. Whilst the indictment was reading, he seemed a monster of crime in his own eyes; and yet, after all, the poor fellow had but committed one offence, and not always *that*. N.B.—Not having the French original at hand, I make my quotations from a friend's copy of Mr. Walter Kelly's translation, which seems to me faithful, spirited, and idiomatically English—liable, in fact, only to the single reproach of occasional provincialisms.

presumed liable to such a weakness; that Joanna was a woman; *ergo*, that she was liable to such a weakness. That is, he only supposes her to have uttered the word by an argument which presumes it impossible for anybody to have done otherwise. I, on the contrary, throw the *onus* of the argument not on presumable tendencies of nature, but on the known facts of that morning's execution, as recorded by multitudes. What else, I demand, than mere weight of metal, absolute nobility of deportment, broke the vast line of battle then arrayed against her? What else but her meek, saintly demeanour won from the enemies that till now had believed her a witch, tears of rapturous admiration? "Ten thousand men," says M. Michelet himself —"ten thousand men wept;" and of these ten thousand the majority were political enemies knitted together by cords of superstition. What else was it but her constancy, united with her angelic gentleness, that drove the fanatic English soldier—who had sworn to throw a faggot on her scaffold, as his tribute of abhorrence, that *did* so, that fulfilled his vow—suddenly to turn away a penitent for life, saying everywhere that he had seen a dove rising upon wings to heaven from the ashes where she had stood? What else drove the executioner to kneel at every shrine for pardon to *his* share in the tragedy? And, if all this were insufficient, then I cite the closing act of her life, as valid on her behalf, were all other testimonies against her. The executioner had been directed to apply his torch from below. He did so. The fiery smoke rose upwards in billowing volumes. A Dominican monk was then standing almost at her side. Wrapped up in his sublime office, he saw not the danger, but still persisted in his prayers. Even then, when the last enemy was racing up the fiery stairs to seize her, even at that moment did this noblest of girls think only for *him*, the one friend that would not forsake her, and not for herself; bidding him with her last breath to care for his own preservation, but to leave *her* to God. That girl, whose latest breath ascended in this sublime expression of self-oblivion, did not utter the word *recant* either with her lips or in her heart. No; she did not, though one should rise from the dead to swear it.

. . . . . .

Bishop of Beauvais! thy victim died in fire upon a scaffold —thou upon a down bed. But for the departing minutes of life, both are oftentimes alike. At the farewell crisis, when the gates of death are opening, and flesh is resting from its struggles, oftentimes the tortured and the torturer have the same truce

from carnal torment; both sink together into sleep; together both sometimes kindle into dreams. When the mortal mists were gathering fast upon you two, bishop and shepherd girl—when the pavilions of life were closing up their shadowy curtains about you—let us try, through the gigantic glooms, to decipher the flying features of your separate visions.

The shepherd girl that had delivered France—she, from her dungeon, she, from her baiting at the stake, she, from her duel with fire, as she entered her last dream—saw Domrémy, saw the fountain of Domrémy, saw the pomp of forests in which her childhood had wandered. That Easter festival, which man had denied to her languishing heart—that resurrection of spring-time, which the darkness of dungeons had intercepted from *her*, hungering after the glorious liberty of forests—were by God given back into her hands, as jewels that had been stolen from her by robbers. With those, perhaps (for the minutes of dreams can stretch into ages), was given back to her by God the bliss of childhood. By special privilege, for *her* might be created in this farewell dream, a second childhood, innocent as the first; but not, like *that*, sad with the gloom of a fearful mission in the rear. This mission had now been fulfilled. The storm was weathered, the skirts even of that mighty storm were drawing off. The blood that she was to reckon for had been exacted; the tears that she was to shed in secret had been paid to the last. The hatred to herself in all eyes had been faced steadily, had been suffered, had been survived. And in her last fight upon the scaffold she had triumphed gloriously; victoriously she had tasted the stings of death. For all, except this comfort from her farewell dream, she had died—died, amidst the tears of ten thousand enemies—died, amidst the drums and trumpets of armies—died, amidst peals redoubling upon peals, volleys upon volleys, from the saluting clarions of martyrs.

Bishop of Beauvais! because the guilt-burdened man is in dreams haunted and waylaid by the most frightful of his crimes, and because upon that fluctuating mirror—rising (like the mocking mirrors of *mirage* in Arabian deserts) from the fens of death—most of all are reflected the sweet countenances which the man has laid in ruins; therefore I know, bishop, that you also, entering your final dream, saw Domrémy. That fountain, of which the witnesses spoke so much, showed itself to your eyes in pure morning dews: but neither dews, nor the holy dawn, could cleanse away the bright spots of innocent blood upon its surface. By the fountain, bishop, you saw a woman seated, that hid her

face. But as *you* draw near, the woman raises her wasted features. Would Domrémy know them again for the features of her child? Ah, but *you* know them, bishop, well! Oh, mercy! what a groan was *that* which the servants, waiting outside the bishop's dream at his bedside, heard from his labouring heart, as at this moment he turned away from the fountain and the woman, seeking rest in the forests afar off. Yet not *so* to escape the woman, whom once again he must behold before he dies. In the forests to which he prays for pity, will he find a respite? What a tumult, what a gathering of feet is there! In glades, where only wild deer should run, armies and nations are assembling; towering in the fluctuating crowd are phantoms that belong to departed hours. There is the great English Prince, Regent of France. There is my Lord of Winchester, the princely cardinal, that died and made no sign. There is the Bishop of Beauvais, clinging to the shelter of thickets. What building is that which hands so rapid are raising? Is it a martyr's scaffold? Will they burn the child of Domrémy a second time? No: it is a tribunal that rises to the clouds; and two nations stand around it, waiting for a trial. Shall my Lord of Beauvais sit again upon the judgment-seat, and again number the hours for the innocent? Ah no! he is the prisoner at the bar. Already all is waiting: the mighty audience is gathered, the court is hurrying to their seats, the witnesses are arrayed, the trumpets are sounding, the judge is taking his place. Oh! but this is sudden. My lord, have you no counsel? "Counsel I have none: in heaven above, or on earth beneath, counsellor there is none now that would take a brief from *me:* all are silent." Is it, indeed, come to this? Alas! the time is short, the tumult is wondrous, the crowd stretches away into infinity, but yet I will search in it for somebody to take your brief: I know of somebody that will be your counsel. Who is this that cometh from Domrémy? Who is she in bloody coronation robes from Rheims? Who is she that cometh with blackened flesh from walking the furnaces of Rouen? This is she, the shepherd girl, counsellor that had none for herself, whom I choose, bishop, for yours. She it is, I engage, that shall take my lord's brief. She it is, bishop, that would plead for you: yes, bishop, SHE—when heaven and earth are silent.

THE
LAST DAYS OF IMMANUEL KANT

I TAKE it for granted that all people of education will acknowledge some interest in the *personal* history of Immanuel Kant, however little their taste or their opportunities may have brought them acquainted with the history of Kant's philosophical opinions. A great man, though in an unpopular path, must always be an object of liberal curiosity. To suppose a reader thoroughly indifferent to Kant, is to suppose him thoroughly unintellectual; and, therefore, though in reality he should happen *not* to regard Kant with interest, it would still be amongst the fictions of courtesy to presume that he *did*. On this principle I make no apology to any reader, philosophic or not, Goth or Vandal, Hun or Saracen, for detaining him upon a short sketch of Kant's life and domestic habits, drawn from the authentic records of his friends and pupils. It is true that, without any illiberality on the part of the public, the *works* of Kant are not, in this country, regarded with the same interest which has gathered about his *name;* and this may be attributed to three causes—first, to the language in which those works are written;[1] secondly, to the supposed obscurity of the philosophy

[1] "*The language*," etc.:—viz. German. For it was a significant fact—significant of that great revolution in conscious dignity which, early in the eighteenth century, had begun to dawn upon the German race—that Leibnitz, the forerunner of Kant, holding the same station in philosophy for the fifty years between 1666 and 1716, which Kant held for the fifty years between 1750 and 1800, wrote chiefly in French; and if at any time not in French, then in Latin; whereas Kant wrote almost exclusively in German. And why? Simply because all the sovereign princes in Germany, that found nothing amiss in German dollars and crowns, drew their little Aulic machineries in so servile a spirit of mimicry from France, that the very breath of their nostrils was the foul, heated atmosphere of Versailles, "laid on" (as our water companies say) at second-hand for German use. The air of German forests which once Arminius had found good enough, the language of Germany that Luther had made resonant as a trumpet of resurrection—these were not superfine enough for the *Serenissimi* of Germany. Even Fritz the unique (*Friederich der Einziger*), which was the German name, the caressing name, for the man whom in England we call the *great* king of Prussia, the hero of the Seven Years' War, the friend and also the enemy of Voltaire, in this respect was even

which they deliver, whether inalienable, or due to Kant's particular mode of expounding it; thirdly, to the unpopularity of *all* speculative philosophy whatsoever, no matter how treated, in a country where the structure and tendency of society impress upon the whole activities of the nation a direction almost exclusively practical.[1] But, whatever may have been the im-

more abject than his predecessors. But, if he did not alter, Germany *did*. The great power and compass of the German language, which the vilest of anti-national servilities obscured to the eyes of those that occupied thrones, had gradually revealed themselves to the popular mind of Germany, as it advanced in culture. And thence it happened that Kant's writings were almost exclusively in German; or, if in any case *not* in German, then in Latin, but Latin only upon an academic necessity. This prosperity, however, of the German language proved the misfortune of Kant's philosophy. For many years *his* philosophy was accessible only to those who read German, an accomplishment exceedingly rare down to the era of Waterloo; or, if in any quarter *not* rare (as amongst the travelling agents of great commercial houses that exported to Germany, and amongst the clerks of bankers), not likely to be disposable for purposes of literature or philosophy. Since then, Kant has been translated into Latin—viz., by Born, whose version I have not seen; and, as respects Kant's cardinal work, admirably by Phiseldek, a Danish professor; and it is possible by others unknown to myself. He has also been translated into English; but if the slight fragment once communicated to myself were at all a fair representative specimen of the prevailing style, not in such English as could have much chance of winning a favourable audience. To do *that*, however, it may be said, would be beyond all powers that ever yet were lodged in *any* language wielded by *any* artist. And, if so, does it not seem invidious to tax this particular version, however unskilful, with a failure that must for all substantial results have attended any possible version, though in the highest degree judicious and masterly? I answer, that no doubt mere skill in the treatment of language could not avail to popularise a philosophy essentially obscure. Popular the Transcendental Philosophy cannot be. That is not its destiny. But, in those days, when as yet German was a sealed language, a judicious version might have availed to disarm this philosophy of all that is likely to prove offensive at first sight. The few who in any nation are capable of mastering it might have been conciliated; at any rate, they did not need to find anything *primâ facie* repulsive, or gratuitously repulsive in its diction; and, here as in other cases, these few would gradually have diffused much of what was chiefly valuable amongst the many. Were it only as to logic and as to ethics, there would have arisen the benefits of a new and severer legislation. Logic, with its proper field and boundaries more rigorously ascertained, would have re-entered upon its rights; renouncing a jurisdiction *not* its own, it would have wielded with more authority and effect that which *is*. And ethics, braced up into stoical vigour by renouncing all effeminate dallyings with *Eudæmonism*, would indirectly have co-operated with the sublime ideals of Christianity.

[1] "*Exclusively practical:*"—At the time when this was written, it might be regarded as nearer to the truth than now, and so far less needing an apology. But on closer consideration, I doubt whether at any period this were true in the degree assumed by rash popular judgments. The speculative philosophy of England has at all times tended to hide itself in theology. In her divinity lurks her philosophy. For more than three centuries the divinity of England has formed a magnificent section in the national literature. In reality there are but two learned churches

mediate fortunes of his writings, no man of enlightened curiosity will regard the author himself without something of a profounder interest. Measured by one test of power—viz., by the number of books written directly for or against himself, to say nothing of those which indirectly he has modified—there is no philosophic writer whatsoever, if we except Aristotle, Des Cartes, and Locke, who can pretend to approach Kant in the extent or in the depth of influence which he has exercised over the minds of men. Such being his claims upon our notice, I repeat that it is no more than a reasonable act of respect for the reader, to presume in him so much interest about Kant as will justify this brief memorial sketch of his life and habits.

in the world—not more, therefore, than two systematic theologies—first, the Papal; secondly, amongst Protestant churches, the Anglican. But is there not also the German? Yes, there is also a German theology, and *has* been any time these forty years. And with respect to this, which styles itself (upon mixed motives of cowardice and self-interest) a *Protestant* theology, it is quite sufficient to say, that it presents no *unity* of any kind, good or bad. It is a distracted, fragmentary thing; without internal cohesion; offering no systematic whole; starting from no avowed creed, and controlled by no common principles of interpretation. But is it not a learned theology; and, secondly, a Protestant theology? As to the first question, any candid man will answer by distinguishing—if philology, and *that* alone, were equal to the task of building up a systematic divinity—then is the German in a supreme degree learned. But I deny that the enormous labours of three and a half centuries, accumulated by our Anglican Church, by the Gallican Church, by various branches of the Romish Church more strictly Papal, can be resolved into mere philology. All studies connected with language having become in our day more critically exact, and with great advantages for accurate research, so far the German is seen under a favourable light. But, in the meantime, its labours of thought and far-stretching meditative collation are as children's play, by comparison with the colossal contributions of our own heroic workmen in that field. As to the second question, the answer is short and peremptory. Is it not Protestant? No; *sans phrase*, no. Neither could it ever have been fancied such, unless under the following fallacy. The characteristic principle of Protestantism is supposed to be the right of private judgment: without scruple, therefore, it is usual to say, all Protestants exercise the right of private judgment. Upon which comes some German, who reverses the rule—saying, all men, exercising the right of private judgment, are Protestants. Under that courteous indulgence, German theology *is* Protestant, for assuredly there is no want of private judgment or audacity. But, in the meantime, the value or efficacy of such a designation has exhaled into smoke. *That* cannot be Protestant which assumes by fits all possible relations to all conceivable subjects. It is enough to say, that the German theology is altogether at sea, drifting in any chance direction, according to the impulse which it receives: sometimes obedient to a random caprice in the individual writer, sometimes to a momentary fashion of thought in the age. It presents almost as many incoherent theologies as there are of individual authors. And finally, under any extremity of feud and schism, there is no recognised court (I speak figuratively, meaning no intellectual tribunal) for arbitration or appeal.

Immanuel Kant,[1] the second of six children, was born at Königsberg, in Prussia (a city at that time containing about fifty thousand inhabitants), on the 22nd of April 1724. His parents were people of humble rank, and not rich even for their own station, but able (with some assistance from a near relative, and with a trifle in addition from a gentleman who esteemed them for their piety and domestic virtues) to give their son Immanuel a liberal education. He was sent, when a child, to a charity school; and in the year 1732 was removed to the Royal (or Frederician) Academy. Here he studied the Greek and Latin classics, and formed an intimacy with one of his school-fellows, David Ruhnken (afterwards so well known to scholars under his Latinised name of Ruhnkenius), which lasted until the death of the latter. In 1737, Kant lost his mother, a woman of exalted character, and of intellectual accomplishments beyond her rank, who contributed to the future eminence of her illustrious son by the direction which she impressed upon his youthful thoughts, and by the elevated morals to which she trained him. Kant never spoke of her to the end of his life without the utmost tenderness, or without earnest acknowledgment of his obligations to her maternal care.

In 1740, at Michaelmas, he entered the university of Königsberg. In 1746, when about twenty-two years old, he wrote his first work, upon a question partly mathematical and partly philosophic—viz., the valuation of living forces. The question concerned had been first moved by Leibnitz, in opposition to the Cartesians; a new *law* of valuation, and not merely a new valuation, was insisted on by Leibnitz; and the dispute was supposed to have been here at last and finally settled, after having occupied most of the great European mathematicians for more than half a century. Kant's *Dissertation* was dedicated to the King of Prussia, but never reached him; having, in fact (though printed, I believe), never been published.[2] From this time till 1770, Kant supported himself as a private tutor in different families, or by giving private lectures in Königsberg,

[1] By the paternal side, the family of Kant was of Scotch derivation; and hence it is that the name was written by Kant the father—*Cant*, that being a Scotch name, and still to be found in Scotland. But Immanuel substituted a *K* for a *C*, in order to adapt it better to the analogies of the German language.

[2] To this circumstance we must attribute its being so little known amongst the philosophers and mathematicians of foreign countries, and also the fact that D'Alembert, whose philosophy was miserably below his mathematics, many years afterwards still continued to represent the dispute as a verbal one.

especially to military men on the art of fortification. In 1770, he was appointed to the Chair of Mathematics, which he exchanged soon after for that of Logic and Metaphysics. On this occasion he delivered an inaugural disputation (*De Mundi Sensibilis atque Intelligibilis Formâ et Principiis*), which is remarkable for containing the first germs [1] of the Transcendental Philosophy. In 1781, he published his great work, the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, or *Critical Investigation of the Pure Reason*. On February 12, 1804, he died.

These are the great epochs of Kant's life. But his was a life remarkable, not so much for its incidents, as for the purity and philosophic dignity of its daily tenour; and of this the best impression will be obtained from Wasianski's memorials—checked and supported by the collateral testimonies of Jachmann, Rink, Borowski, and others. We see him here struggling with the misery of decaying faculties, and with the pain, depression, and agitation of two different complaints—one affecting his stomach, and the other his head; over all which the benignity and nobility of his nature mount, as if on wings, victoriously to the last. The principal defect of this and all other memoirs of Kant is, that they report too little of his conversation and opinions. And perhaps the reader will be disposed to complain, that some of the notices are too minute and circumstantial, so as to be at one time undignified, and at another unfeeling. With respect to the first objection, it may be answered, that biographical gossip of this sort, and ungentlemanly scrutiny into a man's private life, though not what a man of honour would allow himself to write, may be read without blame; and, where a great man is the subject, sometimes with advantage. As to the other objection, I should hardly know how to excuse Mr. Wasianski for kneeling at the bedside of his dying friend, in order to record, with the accuracy of a shorthand reporter, the last flutter of Kant's pulse, and the struggles of nature labouring in extremity, except by supposing that his idealised conception of Kant, as of one belonging to all ages, seemed in *his* mind to transcend and swallow up the ordinary restraints of human sensibility; and that, under this impression, he gave *that* to his sense of a public duty which, it may be hoped, he would willingly have declined on the impulse of his private

[1] "*The first germs:*"—Such, I believe, is the prevailing phrase, but in reality much more than germs. To me this memorable essay seems rather to resemble an abstract of the *Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*, from a dim recollection of it, than a foreshadowing of its outline by any effort of imperfect preconception.

affections. Now let us begin, premising that for the most part it is Wasianski who speaks.[1]

. . . . . .

My knowledge of Professor Kant began long before the period to which this little memorial of him chiefly refers. In the year 1773 or 1774, I cannot exactly say which, I attended his lectures. Afterwards I acted as his amanuensis; and in that office was naturally brought into a closer connection with him than any other of the students; so that, without any request on my part, he granted me a general privilege of free access to his class-room. In 1780 I took orders, and withdrew myself from all connection with the university. I still continued, however, to reside in Königsberg; but wholly forgotten, or at any rate wholly unnoticed, by Kant. Ten years later (that is to say, in 1790), I met him by accident at a gay festal party; in fact it was a wedding party, and the wedding was that of a Königsberg professor. At table, Kant distributed his conversation and attentions pretty generally; but after the entertainment, when the company had dispersed into separate groups, he came and seated himself obligingly by my side. At that time I was a florist—an amateur, I mean, from the passion I had for flowers; upon learning which he talked of my favourite pursuit, and with very extensive information. In the course of our conversation, I was surprised to find that he was perfectly acquainted with all the circumstances of my situation. He reminded me of our previous connection; expressed his satisfaction at finding that I was happy; and was so good as to desire that, if my engagements allowed me, I would now and then come and dine with him. Soon after this, he rose to take his leave; and, as our roads lay in the same direction, he proposed to me that I should accompany him home. I did so; and then received an invitation for the next week, with a general invitation for every week after, and permission to name my own day. At first I found

[1] "*It is Wasianski who speaks:*"—This notification, however, must not be too rigorously interpreted. Undoubtedly it would be wrong, and of evil example, to distribute and confound the separate responsibilities of men. When the opinions involve important moral distinctions, by all means let every man hang by his own hook, and answer for no more than he has solemnly undertaken for. But, on the other hand, it would be most annoying to the reader, if all the petty recollections of some ten or fourteen men reporting upon Kant were individually to be labelled each with its separate certificate of origin and ownership. *Wasianski loquitur* may be regarded as the running title: but it is not, therefore, to be understood that Wasianski is always responsible for each particular opinion or fact reported, unless where it is liable to doubt or controversy. In that case, the responsibility is cautiously discriminated and restricted.

it difficult to account for the distinction with which Kant had treated me; and I conjectured that some obliging friend might have spoken of me, in his hearing, somewhat more advantageously than belonged to my humble pretensions; but more intimate experience has convinced me, that he was in the habit of making continual inquiries after the welfare of his former pupils, and was heartily rejoiced to hear of their prosperity. So that it appeared I was wrong in thinking he had forgotten me.

This revival of my intimacy with Kant coincided pretty nearly, in point of time, with a complete change in his own domestic arrangements. Up to this period it had been his custom to dine at a *table d'hôte*. But he now began to keep house himself; and every day invited a few friends to dine with him, so as to fix the party (himself included) at three for the lower extreme, and at nine for the upper, and upon any little festival from five to eight. He was, in fact, a punctual observer of Lord Chesterfield's rule [1]—that his dinner party, himself included, should not fall below the number of the Graces, nor exceed that of the Muses. In the whole economy of his household arrangements, and especially of his dinner parties, there was something peculiar, and amusingly opposed to the conventional usage of society; not, however, that there was any neglect of decorum, such as sometimes occurs in houses where there are no ladies to impress a better tone upon the manners. The routine, which under no circumstances either varied or relaxed, was this: no sooner was dinner ready, than Lampe, the professor's old footman, stepped into the study with a certain measured air, and announced it. This summons was obeyed at a pace of double-quick time—Kant talking all the way to the eating-room about the state of the weather,[2] a subject which he usually pursued during the earlier part of the dinner. Graver themes, such as the political events of the day, were never introduced before dinner, or at all in his study. The moment that Kant had taken his seat, and unfolded his napkin, he opened the business of the hour with a particular formula—"*Now, then, gentlemen!*" The words are nothing; but the

[1] This was no rule of Lord Chesterfield's, but a rule bequeathed to us by the classical ages of Greece. Not happening, however, to remember this, and looking out for some suitable person to invest with the paternity of so graceful a formula, the German writer showed his judgment in fixing upon Lord Chesterfield; for, though *not* his, the *mot* is really not better than many that *are:* it ought to be his.

[2] His reason for which was, that he considered the weather one of the principal forces which act upon the health; and his own frame was exquisitely sensible to all atmospheric influences.

tone and air with which he uttered them proclaimed, in a way that nobody could mistake, relaxation from the toils of the morning, and determinate abandonment of himself to social enjoyment. The table was hospitably spread; a sufficient choice of dishes there was to meet the variety of tastes; and the decanters of wine were placed, not on a distant sideboard, or under the odious control of a servant (first cousin to the Barmecides), but anacreontically on the table, and at the elbow of every guest.[1] Every person helped himself; and all delays, from too elaborate a spirit of ceremony, were so disagreeable to Kant, that he seldom failed to express his displeasure with anything of that sort, though not angrily. For this hatred of delay Kant had a special excuse, having always worked hard from an early hour in the morning, and eaten nothing until dinner. Hence it was that in the latter period of his life, though less perhaps from actual hunger than from some uneasy sensation of habit or periodical irritation of stomach, he could hardly wait with patience for the arrival of the last person invited.

There was no friend of Kant's but considered the day on which he was to dine with him as a day of festal pleasure. Without giving himself the air of an instructor, Kant really was such in the very highest degree. The whole entertainment

[1] Something is said or insinuated, by some of the contributors to this record, about second courses. But, in strict truth, when speaking of so humble a *menage* as that of any scholar possessing no private fortune, or (like Kant) none beyond that modest one of about £4000 sterling, which academic office, one is obliged to recollect that anything whatever in the shape of a *remove* will stand good for a technical "*course*." I knew a man who presented his guests with a plate of water-cresses and radishes, as what he called a third course, and two kinds of biscuits as a *fourth*. Meantime, I have myself drawn from a private source some information (liable to no doubt whatsoever) which would partially set aside the reports of Wasianski and Rink). Do I therefore allow myself to question the veracity of these gentlemen? Not at all. The mere triviality of the whole case is a sufficient guarantee of their accuracy. But of necessity they (one as much as the other) spoke to a particular period—a month, or a year. My two informants spoke to far different periods—differing by five and nine years from the period of Wasianski, and each from the other differing by four. These two informants (one of them an Englishman, long settled as a merchant at Königsberg) described to me a dinner in all its circumstantial features. The sum of their information was, that in those days Kant's dinners, if at all of the festival class commemorating any interesting event, were long and loitering, as indeed all dinners ought to be which minister to colloquial pleasures as their primary objects. They lasted through three or four hours; and the dishes were not placed on the table at all, but were handed round one by one in succession. On this plan it was out of the question to talk of courses. People leaned back in their chairs, as at any aristocratic dinner in England, for half-hours together, simply conversing, and recurring only at intervals to the business of eating, when any dish happened to be offered which specially attracted the particular guest.

was seasoned with the overflow of his enlightened mind, poured out naturally and unaffectedly upon every topic, as the chances of conversation suggested it; and the time flew rapidly away, from one o'clock to four, five or even later, profitably and delightfully. Kant tolerated no lulls, which was the name he gave to the momentary pauses in conversation, when its animation languished. Some means or other he always devised for rekindling its tone of interest; and in this he was much assisted by the tact with which he drew from every quest his peculiar tastes, or the particular direction of his pursuits; and on these, be they what they might, he was never unprepared to speak with knowledge, and with the interest of an original observer. The local affairs of Königsberg must have been interesting indeed before they could be allowed to usurp attention at *his* table. And what may seem still more singular, it was rarely or never that he directed the conversation to any branch of the philosophy founded by himself. Indeed he was perfectly free from the fault which besets so many *savans* and *literati*, of intolerance towards those whose pursuits might happen to have disqualified them for any special sympathy with his own. His style of conversation was popular in the highest degree, and unscholastic; so much so, that any stranger acquainted with his works, but not with his person, would have found it difficult to believe, that in this delightful and genial companion he saw the profound author of the Transcendental Philosophy.

The subjects of conversation at Kant's table were drawn chiefly from natural philosophy, chemistry, meteorology, natural history, and, above all, from politics. The news of the day, as reported in the newspapers, was discussed with a peculiar vigilance of examination.[1] With regard to any narra-

[1] And even with a searching spirit of scepticism, for which all the journals in central Europe (as then conducted) furnished but too much justification. In none of the German states was there, nor could there have been, either illumination to discern, or freedom to choose. The French Revolution had suddenly begun to rock, like a succession of earthquakes, beneath and round about all thrones. Awful chasms in the midst of portentous gloom, equally uncertain for their extent and their direction, seemed opening and yawning beneath men's feet. And at a time when the kings of Christendom could rationally have faced the new-born dreadful republic on the Seine in no rational spirit of hope, but such as rested on fraternal alliance and absolute good faith, most of them were perfidiously undermining, by secret intrigues for purely selfish objects, those great military confederacies on which ostensibly they relied. Prussia, above all, in the very noon of her aggressive movements against France, and in the mid ravings of her hellish menaces against Paris (such as furnished but too colourable a plea to the atrocities that subsequently turned France into a butcher's shambles), was playing the traitress to her engagements from

tive that wanted dates of time and place, plausible as it might otherwise seem, he was uniformly an inexorable sceptic, and held it unworthy of repetition. So keen was his penetration into the interior of political events, and the secret policy under which they moved, that he talked rather with the authority of a diplomatic person who had access to cabinet intelligence, than as a simple spectator of the great scenes which were in those days unfolding throughout Europe. At the time of the French Revolution, he threw out many conjectures, and what then passed for paradoxical anticipations, especially in regard to military operations, which were as punctually fulfilled as his own memorable conjecture in regard to the hiatus in the planetary system between Mars and Jupiter,[1] the entire confirmation of which he lived to witness on the discovery of Ceres by Piazzi, and of Pallas by Dr. Olbers. These two discoveries, by the way, impressed him much; and they furnished a topic on which he always talked with pleasure; though, according to his usual

the first—fixing her hungry eye upon the approaching wrecks of Poland; and in captivity to this fierce vulture instinct, as if scenting continually the odour of distant carrion in the East, altogether overlooking her great military interests in the West, so perilously confided to the Duke of Brunswick. To the stern integrity of Kant, all such double-dealing was hateful. That it should be imputed to his own country grieved him profoundly. Personally he was known to the reigning king of Prussia; had been treated by that prince with distinguished consideration; and thus had an *extra* motive for refusing at first to read the signs of the Prussian policy as many others read them. But he was too sagacious not to suspect them; and the evidences of this deep treachery, which laid the foundation for suffering so incalculable to all the states of Christendom, but to none so much as to Prussia herself from 1806 to 1813, finally became irresistible.

[1] Vesta and Juno were discovered in June 1804, about the time when Wasianski wrote. Meantime, I do not profess to understand my German authorities at this point. Any *hiatus* in the planetary system that Kant suspected, so far as I am acquainted with his views, did not lie between Mars and Jupiter, but in a higher region; neither was it of a nature to be remedied by bodies so small as Ceres and Pallas. What Kant had indicated as an apparent ground for presuming some *hiatus* in our own system, was the abruptness of the transition from one order of orbits to another—viz., from the *planetary*, which might be regarded as by tendency circular, to the *cometary* order, which departs from this tendency by all degrees of eccentricity. The passing of the first into the last seemed to Kant not properly graduated: it was discontinuous. He presumed, therefore, that between the outermost known planet, which at that time was Saturn, and the cometary system, some great planet must exist that would constitute a link of transition—as being more eccentric than Saturn, and less so than the nearest of the comets. Not very long after was discovered by Herschel (the father) the great planet *Uranus*, or (as it was called by the discoverer in a spirit of gratitude to his patron) the *Georgium Sidus*. This discovery was so far a justification of Kant's conjecture; which conjecture was altogether an *à priori* speculation, like that which led to the discovery of Neptune—that is, it did not by one iota rest upon any experimental hint, but upon necessities *à priori*.

modesty, he never said a word of his own sagacity in having upon *à priori* grounds shown the probability of such discoveries many years before.

It was not only in the character of a companion that Kant shone, but also as a most courteous and liberal host, who had no greater pleasure than in seeing his guests happy and jovial, and rising with exhilarated spirits from the mixed pleasures—intellectual and liberally sensual—of his Platonic banquets. Chiefly, perhaps, with a view to the sustaining of genial hilarity, he showed himself somewhat of an artist in the composition of his dinner parties. Two rules there were which he obviously observed, and I may say invariably: the first was, that the company should be miscellaneous; this for the sake of securing sufficient variety to the conversation: and accordingly his parties presented as much variety as the world of Königsberg afforded, being drawn from all varieties of life—men in office, professors, physicians, clergymen, and enlightened merchants. His second rule was, to have a due balance of *young* men, frequently of *very* young men, selected from the students of the university, in order to impress a movement of gaiety and juvenile playfulness on the conversation; an additional motive for which, as I have reason to believe, was, that in this way he withdrew his mind from the sadness which sometimes overshadowed it, for the early deaths of some young friends whom he loved.

And this leads me to mention a singular feature in Kant's way of expressing his sympathy with his friends in sickness. So long as the danger was imminent, he testified a restless anxiety, made perpetual inquiries, waited with impatience for the crisis, and sometimes could not pursue his customary labours from agitation of mind. But no sooner was the patient's death announced than he recovered his composure, and assumed an air of stern tranquillity—almost of indifference. The reason was, that he viewed life in general, and therefore that particular affection of life which we call sickness, as a state of oscillation and perpetual change, between which and the fluctuating sympathies of hope and fear, there was a natural proportion that justified them to the reason; whereas death as a permanent state that admitted of no *more* and no *less*, that terminated all anxiety, and for ever extinguished the agitations of suspense—he regarded as not adapted to any state of feeling, but one of the same enduring and unchanging character. However, all this philosophic heroism gave way on one occasion; for many

persons will remember the tumultuous grief which he manifested upon the death of Mr. Ehrenboth, a young man of very fine understanding and extensive attainments, for whom he had the greatest affection. And naturally it happened, in so long a life as his, in spite of his provident rule for selecting his social companions as much as possible amongst the young, that he had to mourn for many a heavy loss that could never be supplied to him.

To return, however, to the course of his day, immediately after the termination of his dinner party, Kant walked out for exercise; but on this occasion he never took any companion; partly, perhaps, because he thought it right, after so much convivial and colloquial relaxation, to pursue his meditations,[1] and partly (as I happen to know) for this very peculiar reason—that he wished to breathe exclusively through his nostrils, which he could not do, if he were obliged continually to open his mouth in conversation. His reason for this wish was, that the atmospheric air, being thus carried round by a longer circuit, and reaching the lungs, therefore, in a state of less rawness, and at a temperature somewhat higher, would be less apt to irritate them. By a steady perseverance in this practice, which he constantly recommended to his friends, he flattered himself with a long immunity from coughs, hoarsenesses, catarrhs, and all modes of pulmonary derangement; and the fact really was, that these troublesome affections attacked him very rarely. Indeed, I myself, by only occasionally adopting his rule, have found my chest not so liable as formerly to such attacks.

On returning from his walk, he sat down to his library table, and read till dusk. During this period of dubious light, so friendly to thought, he rested in tranquil meditation on what he had been reading, provided the book were worth it; if not, he sketched his lecture for the next day, or some part of any book he might then be composing. During this state of repose, he took his station winter and summer by the stove, looking

[1] Mr. Wasianski is wrong. To pursue his meditations under these circumstances might, perhaps, be an inclination of Kant's to which he yielded, but not one which he would justify or erect into a maxim. He disapproved of eating alone, or *solipsismus convictorii*, as he calls it, on the principle, that a man would be apt, if not called off by the business and pleasure of a social party, to think too much or too closely, an exercise which he considered very injurious to the stomach during the first process of digestion. On the same principle he disapproved of walking or riding alone; the double exercise of thinking and of bodily agitation, carried on simultaneously, being calculated, as he conceived, to press too hard upon the stomach.

through the window at the old tower of Löbenicht; not that he could be said properly to see it, but the tower rested upon his eye as distant music on the ear—obscurely, or but half revealed to the consciousness. No words seem forcible enough to express his sense of the gratification which he derived from this old tower, when seen under these circumstances of twilight and quiet reverie. The sequel, indeed, showed how important it had become to his comfort; for at length some poplars in a neighbouring garden shot up to such a height as to obscure the tower, upon which Kant became very uneasy and restless, and at length found himself positively unable to pursue his evening meditations. Fortunately, the proprietor of the garden was a very considerate and obliging person, who had, besides, a high regard for Kant; and, accordingly, upon a representation of the case being made to him, he gave orders that the poplars should be cropped. This was done; the old tower of Löbenicht was again exposed; Kant recovered his equanimity, and once more found himself able to pursue his twilight meditations in peace.

After the candles were brought, Kant prosecuted his studies till nearly ten o'clock A quarter of an hour before retiring for the night, he withdrew his mind as much as possible from every class of thoughts which demanded any exertion or energy of attention, on the principle, that by stimulating and exciting him too much, such thoughts would be apt to cause wakefulness; and the slightest interference with his customary hour of falling asleep was in the highest degree unpleasant to him. Happily, this was with him a very rare occurrence. He undressed himself without his servant's assistance; but in such an order, and with such a Roman regard to decorum and the τὸ πρέπον, that he was always ready at a moment's warning to make his appearance without embarrassment to himself or to others. This done, he lay down on a mattress, and wrapped himself up in a quilt, which in summer was always of cotton; in autumn, of wool; at the setting-in of winter, he used both; and, against very severe cold, he protected himself by one of eider-down, of which the part which covered his shoulders was not stuffed with feathers, but padded, or rather wadded closely with layers of wool. Long practice had taught him a very dexterous mode of *nesting* and enswathing himself in the bedclothes. First of all, he sat down on the bedside; then with an agile motion he vaulted obliquely into his lair; next he drew one corner of the bedclothes under his left shoulder, and, passing it below his back

brought it round so as to rest under his right shoulder; fourthly, by a particular *tour d'adresse*, he operated on the other corner in the same way; and finally contrived to roll it round his whole person. Thus swathed like a mummy, or (as I used to tell him) self-involved like a silk-worm in its cocoon, he awaited the approach of sleep, which generally came on immediately. For Kant's health was exquisite; not mere negative health, or the absence of pain, and of irritation, and also of *mal-aise* (either of which, though not "pain," is often worse to bear), but a state of positive pleasurable sensation, and a conscious possession of all his vital activities. Accordingly, when packed up for the night in the way I have described, he would often ejaculate to himself (as he used to tell us at dinner)—"Is it possible to conceive a human being with more perfect health than myself?" In fact, such was the purity of his life, and such the happy condition of his situation, that no uneasy passion ever arose to excite him, nor care to harass, nor pain to awake him. Even in the severest winter, his sleeping-room was without a fire; only in his latter years he yielded so far to the entreaties of his friends as to allow of a very small one. All nursing or self-indulgence found no quarter with Kant. In fact, five minutes, in the coldest weather, sufficed to supersede the first chill of the bed, by the diffusion of a general glow over his person. If he had any occasion to leave his room in the night-time (for it was always kept dark day and night, summer and winter), he guided himself by a rope, which was duly attached to his bed-post every night, and carried into the adjoining apartment.

Kant never perspired,[1] night or day. Yet it was astonishing

[1] This appears less extraordinary, considering the description of Kant's person, given originally by Reichardt, about eight years after his death. "Kant," says this writer, "was drier than dust" [if so, he was worse than Dr. Dry-*as*-dust, whom else we generally place at the head of his category], "both in body and mind. His person was small; and possibly a more meagre, arid, parched anatomy of a man has not appeared upon this earth. The upper part of his face was grand; forehead lofty and serene, nose elegantly turned, eyes brilliant and penetrating; but expressing powerfully the coarsest sensuality, which in him displayed itself by immoderate addiction to eating and drinking." This last feature of his temperament is, beyond a doubt, here expressed much too harshly. There were but two things on earth—viz., coffee and tobacco—for which Kant had an immoderate liking; and from both of those, under some notion that they were unwholesome, it is notorious that generally he abstained. By the way, Kant's indisposition to perspire, taken in connection with his exquisite health, may serve perhaps to refute (or, at least, to throw strong doubts upon) a dark fancy, which has been sometimes insinuated as to the misery which desolated the life of Cowper the poet. I knew personally several of Cowper's nearest friends and relatives—one of whom, by the way, a brilliant and accomplished barrister, with a splendid fortune, shot himself

how much heat he supported habitually in his study, and, in fact, was not easy if it wanted but one degree of this heat. Seventy-five degrees of Fahrenheit was the invariable temperature of this room in which he chiefly lived; and if it fell below that point, no matter at what season of the year, he had it raised artificially to the usual standard. In the heats of summer he went thinly dressed, and invariably in silk stockings; yet, as even this dress could not always secure him against perspiring when engaged in active exercise, he had a singular remedy in reserve. Retiring to some shady place, he stood still and motionless—with the air and attitude of a person listening, or in suspense—until his usual *aridity* was restored. Even in the most sultry summer night, if the slightest trace of perspiration had sullied his night-dress, he spoke of it with emphasis, as of an accident that perfectly shocked him.

On this occasion, whilst illustrating Kant's notions of the animal economy, it may be as well to add one other particular, which is, that, for fear of obstructing the circulation of the blood, he never would wear garters; yet, as he found it difficult to keep up his stockings without them, he had invented for himself a most elaborate substitute, which I will describe. In a little pocket, somewhat smaller than a watch-pocket, but occupying pretty nearly the same situation as a watch-pocket on each thigh, there was placed a small box, something like a watch-case, but smaller; into this box was introduced a watch-spring in a wheel, round about which wheel was wound an elastic cord, for regulating the force of which there was a separate contrivance. To the two ends of this cord were attached hooks, which hooks were carried through a small aperture in the pockets, and so, passing down the inner and the outer side of the thigh, caught hold of two loops which were fixed on the off side and the near side of each stocking. As might be expected, so complex an apparatus was liable, like the Ptolemaic system of the heavens, to occasional derangements; however, by good luck, I was able to apply an easy remedy to these disorders,

under no other impulse than that of pure *ennui*, or *tædium vitæ*, or, in fact, furious rebellion against the odious monotony of life. *Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum:* this was his outcry. Ah, wherefore should Thursday be such a servile *facsimile* of Wednesday? This, however, argued a taint of insanity in the family. But, said some people, that taint (presuming it to exist) rested upon the incapacity of perspiring. Cowper could not perspire. This I know to be a fact; and connecting it with Cowper's constitutional tendency to *mania*, one might fancy the one peculiarity to be the cause of the other. But, on the other hand, here is Kant equally non-perspiring, who never betrayed any tendency to mania.

which otherwise threatened to disturb the comfort, and even the serenity, of the great man.

Precisely at five minutes before five o'clock, winter and summer, Lampe, Kant's footman, who had formerly served in the army, marched into his master's room with the air of a sentinel on duty, and cried aloud, in a military tone, "Mr. Professor, the time is come." This summons Kant invariably obeyed without one moment's delay, as a soldier does the word of command—never, under any circumstances, allowing himself a respite, not even under the rare accident of having passed a sleepless night. As the clock struck five, Kant was seated at the breakfast-table, where he drank what he called *one* cup of tea; and no doubt he thought it such; but the fact was, in part from his habit of reverie, and in part also for the purpose of refreshing its warmth, he filled up his cup so often, that in general he is supposed to have drunk two, three, or some unknown number. Immediately after, he smoked a pipe of tobacco (the only one which he allowed himself through the entire day), but so rapidly, that a pile of reliques partially aglow remained unsmoked. During this operation he thought over his arrangements for the day, as he had done the evening before during twilight. About seven he usually went to his lecture-room, and from that he returned to his writing-table. Precisely at three-quarters before one, he arose from his chair, and called aloud to the cook, "It has struck three-quarters." The meaning of which summons was this:—At dinner, and immediately after taking soup, it was his constant practice to swallow what he called a dram, which consisted either of Hungarian wine, of Rhenish, of a cordial, or (in default of these) of the English compound called *Bishop*. A flask or a jug of this was brought up by the cook on the proclamation of the three-quarters. Kant hurried with it to the dining-room, poured out his *quantum*, left it standing in readiness (covered, however, with paper, to prevent its becoming vapid), and then went back to his study, where he awaited the arrival of his guests, whom to the latest period of his life he never received otherwise than in full dress.

Thus we come round again to dinner, and the reader has now an accurate picture of Kant's day, according to the usual succession of its changes. To *him* the monotony of this succession was not burdensome, and probably contributed, with the uniformity of his diet, and other habits of the same regularity, to lengthen his life. On this consideration, indeed, he had come

to regard his health and his old age as in a great measure the product of his own exertions. He spoke of himself often under the figure of a gymnastic artist, who had continued for nearly fourscore years to support his balance upon the tight-rope of life, without once swerving to the right or to the left. And certainly, in spite of every illness to which his constitutional tendencies had exposed him, he still kept his position in life triumphantly.

This anxious attention to his health accounts for the great interest which he attached to all new discoveries in medicine, or to new ways of theorising on the old ones. As a work of great pretension in both classes, he set the highest value upon the theory of the Scotch physician, Brown, or (as it is usually called, from the Latinised name of its author) the Brunonian Theory. No sooner had Weikard adopted [1] and popularised it in Germany, than Kant became familiar with its details. He considered it not only as a great step taken for medicine, but even for the general interests of man, and fancied that in this he saw something analogous to the course which human nature has held in still more important inquiries—viz.: first of all, a continual ascent towards the more and more elaborately complex, and then a treading back, on its own steps, towards the simple and elementary. Dr. Beddoes' Essays, also, for producing by art and for curing pulmonary consumption, and the method of Reich for curing fevers, made a powerful impression upon him; which, however, declined as those novelties (especially the last) began to sink in credit.[2] As to Dr. Jenner's dis-

[1] This theory was afterwards greatly modified in Germany; and judging from the random glances which I throw on these subjects, I believe that in this recast it still keeps its ground in that country.

[2] It seems singular, but in fact illustrates perhaps the dominion of chance and accident in distributing so unequally and disproportionately the attention of learned inquirers to important and suggestive novelties; and in part also it proclaims the very imperfect diffusion in those days, through scientific journals, of useful discoveries—that, in the treatment of *fevers*, Kant seems never to have heard of the "*cold-water affusion*" introduced by Dr. Currie; nor again of the revolutionary principles applied by Dr. Kentish and others to the treatment of *burns*. Dr. Beddoes, who married a sister of Miss Edgeworth's, and was the father of Beddoes the poet (a man of real genius), Kant had heard of, and regarded with much interest. In which there was an unconscious justice. For Dr. Beddoes read extensively amongst German literature in the first decennium of this century, when a few dozens composed the entire body of such students in Great Britain. *He* was, in fact, the first man who uttered the name of Jean Paul Richter in an English book; as I myself was the first (December 1821) who gave in English a specimen of Richter's style. (It was a chance extract, such as I could command at the time, from his *Flegel-jahre*.) Beddoes, meantime, an offset from the school (if school it could be called) of the splendid Erasmus Darwin, Kant knew and admired. But Darwin, the leader in this freethinking school, Kant had not apparently ever heard of.

covery of vaccination, he was less favourably disposed to it; he apprehended dangerous consequences from the absorption of a brutal miasma into the human blood, or at least into the lymph; and at any rate he thought that, as a guarantee against the variolous infection, it required a much longer probation.[1] Groundless as all these views were, it was exceedingly entertaining to hear the fertility of argument and analogy which he brought forward to support them. One of the subjects which occupied him at the latter end of his life, was the theory and phenomena of galvanism, which, however, he never satisfactorily mastered. Augustin's book upon this subject was about the last that he read, and his copy still retains on the margin his pencil-marks of doubts, queries, and suggestions.

The infirmities of age now began to steal upon Kant, and betrayed themselves in more shapes than one. Connected with Kant's prodigious memory for all things having any intellectual bearings, he had from youth laboured under an unusual weakness of this faculty in relation to the common affairs of daily life. Some remarkable instances of this are on record from the period of his childish days; and now, when his second childhood was commencing, this infirmity increased upon him very sensibly. One of the first signs was, that he began to repeat the same stories more than once on the same day. Indeed, the decay of his memory was too palpable to escape his own notice; and, in order to provide against it, and to secure himself from all apprehension of inflicting tedium upon his guests, he began to write a syllabus, or list of themes, for each day's conversation, on cards, or the covers of letters, or any chance scrap of paper. But these memoranda accumulated so fast upon him, and were so easily lost, or not forthcoming at the proper moment, that I prevailed on him to substitute a blank-paper book, which still remains, and exhibits some affecting memorials of his own conscious weakness. As often happens, however, in such cases, he had a perfect memory for the remote events of his life, and could repeat with great readiness very long passages from German or Latin poems, especially from the *Æneid*, whilst the

[1] Kant, in his primary objections to the vaccine inoculation, will be confounded with Dr. Rowley, and other anti-vaccine fanatics. But this ought not to hide from us, that, in his inclination to regard vaccination as no more than a *temporary* guarantee against small-pox, Kant's sagacity has been largely justified by the event. It is now agreed that vaccination, as an *absolute* guarantee against the natural small-pox, ought to be repeated every seven years.

very words that had been uttered but a moment before dropped away from his remembrance. The past came forward with the distinctness and liveliness of an immediate existence, whilst the present faded away into the obscurity of infinite distance.

Another sign of his mental decay was the weakness with which he now began to theorise. He accounted for everything by electricity. A singular mortality at this time prevailed amongst the cats of Vienna, Basle, Copenhagen, and other places widely remote. Cats being so eminently an electric animal, of course he attributed this epizootic to electricity. During the same period he persuaded himself that a peculiar configuration of clouds prevailed; this he took as a collateral proof of his electrical hypothesis. His own headaches, too, which in all probability were a mere remote effect of old age, and a direct one of an inability [1] to think as easily and as severely as formerly, he explained upon the same principle. And this was a notion of which his friends were not anxious to disabuse him; because, as something of the same character of weather (and therefore probably the same general distribution of the electric power) is found to prevail for whole cycles of years, entrance upon another cycle held out to him some prospect of relief. A delusion, which secured the comforts of hope, was the next best thing to an actual system of relief; and a man who, in such circumstances, is cured of his delusion, "*cui demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error*," might reasonably have exclaimed, "*Pol, me occidistis, amici*."

Possibly the reader may suppose that, in this particular instance of charging his own decays upon the state of the atmosphere, Kant was actuated by the weakness of vanity, or some unwillingness to face the real fact that his powers were decaying. But this was not the case. He was perfectly aware of his own condition; and, as early as 1799, he said, in my presence, to a party of his friends, "Gentlemen, I am old, and weak, and childish, and you must treat me as a child." Or perhaps it may be thought that he shrank from the contemplation of death, which, as apoplexy seemed to be threatened by the pains in his head, might have happened any day. But neither was this the case. He now lived in a continual state of

[1] Mr. Wasianski is probably quite in the wrong here. If the hindrances which nature presented to the act of thinking were now on the increase, on the other hand, the disposition to think, by his own acknowledgment, was on the wane. The power and the habit altering in proportion, there is no case made out of that disturbed equilibrium to which apparently he would attribute the headaches.

resignation, and prepared for any decree whatever of Providence. "Gentlemen," said he, one day to his guests, "I do not fear to die. I assure you, as in the presence of God, that if, on this very night, suddenly the summons to death were to reach me, I should hear it with calmness, should raise my hands to heaven, and say, Blessed be God! Were it indeed possible that a whisper such as this could reach my ear—Fourscore years thou hast lived, in which time thou hast inflicted much evil upon thy fellow-men, the case would be otherwise." Whosoever has heard Kant speak of his own death, will bear witness to the tone of earnest sincerity which, on such occasions, marked his manner and gestures.

A third sign of his decaying faculties was, that he now lost all accurate measure of time. One minute, nay, without exaggeration, a much less space of time, stretched out in his apprehension of things to a wearisome duration. Of this I can give one rather amusing instance, which was of constant recurrence. At the beginning of the last year of his life, he fell into a custom of taking, immediately after dinner, a cup of coffee, especially on those days when it happened that I was of his party. And such was the importance he attached to this little pleasure, that he would even make a memorandum beforehand, in the blank-paper book I had given him, that on the next day I was to dine with him, and consequently that there was to be coffee. Sometimes it would happen that the interest of conversation carried him past the time at which he felt the craving for it; and this I was not sorry to observe, as I feared that coffee, which he had never been accustomed to,[1] might disturb his rest at night.

[1] How this happened to be the case in Germany, Mr. Wasianski has not explained. Perhaps the English merchants at Königsberg, being amongst Kant's oldest and most intimate friends, had early familiarised him with the practice of drinking tea, and with other English tastes. However, Jachmann tells us that Kant was extravagantly fond of coffee, but forced himself to abstain from it under a notion that it was very unwholesome; but whether on any other separate ground beyond that of its tendency to defraud men of sleep, is not explained. A far better reason for abstaining from coffee, than any visionary fancies about its insalubrity, rests in England upon the villainous mode of its preparation. In respect to cookery, and every conceivable culinary process, the English (and in exaggerated degree the Scotch) are the most uncultured of the human race. It was an old saying of a sarcastic Frenchman on visiting that barbarous city of London (foremost upon earth for many great qualities, but the most barbarous upon earth (except Edinburgh and Glasgow) for all culinary arts)—"Behold!" said the Frenchman, "a land where they have sixty religions" (alluding to the numerous subdivisions of Protestant dissent), "and only one sauce." Now this was a fib: for, wretched as England is and ever was in this respect, she could certainly count twenty-five. But, meantime, what would the Frenchman have thought of

But, if this did not happen, then commenced a scene of some interest. Coffee must be brought "upon the spot" (a word he had constantly in his mouth during his latter days) "in a moment." And the expressions of his impatience, though from old habit still gentle, were so lively, and had so much of infantine *naïveté* about them, that none of us could forbear smiling. Knowing what would happen, I had taken care that all the preparations should be made beforehand: the coffee was ground; the water was boiling; and the very moment the word was given, his servant shot in like an arrow, and plunged the coffee into the water. All that remained, therefore, was to give it time to boil up. But this trifling delay seemed unendurable to Kant. All consolations were thrown away upon him: vary the formula as we might, he was never at a loss for a reply. If it was said, "Dear professor, the coffee will be brought up in a moment."—"*Will* be!" he would say, "but there's the rub, that it only *will* be:

'Man never *is*, but always *to be* blest.'"

If another cried out, "The coffee is coming immediately," "Yes," he would retort, "and so is the next hour: and, by the way, it's about that length of time that I have waited for it." Then he would collect himself with a stoical air, and say, "Well, one can die after all: it is but dying; and in the next world, thank God! there is no drinking of coffee, and consequently no waiting for it." Sometimes he would rise from his chair, open the door, and cry out, with a feeble querulousness, as if appealing to the last arrears of humanity amongst his fellow-creatures, "Coffee! coffee!" And when at length he heard the servant's steps upon the stairs, he would turn round to us, and, as joyfully as ever sailor from the mast-head, he would call out, "Land, land! my dear friends, I see land."

This general decline in Kant's powers, active and passive, gradually brought about a revolution in his habits of life. Hitherto, as I have already mentioned, he went to bed at ten, and rose a little before five. The latter practice he still observed, but not the other. In 1802 he retired as early as nine, and afterwards still earlier. He found himself so much refreshed by this addition to his rest, that at first he was disposed to utter a ἕυρηκα, as over some great discovery in the art of restoring

Scotland, that absolutely has not one? Even to this day, the horrible fish, called *haddy* throughout Scotland, is eaten without any sauce whatever; by which means its atrocities are made ten times more distinguishably atrocious.

exhausted nature: but afterwards, on pushing it still farther, he did not find the success answer his expectations. His walks he now limited to a few turns in the king's gardens, which were at no great distance from his own house. In order to walk more firmly, he adopted a peculiar method of stepping: he carried his foot to the ground, not forward, and obliquely, but perpendicularly, and with a kind of stamp, so as to secure a larger basis, by setting down the entire sole at once. Notwithstanding this precaution, upon one occasion he fell in the street. He was quite unable to raise himself; and two young ladies, who saw the accident, ran to his assistance. With his usual graciousness of manner he thanked them fervently for their assistance, and presented one of them with a rose which he happened to have in his hand. This lady was not personally known to Kant; but she was greatly delighted with his little present, and still keeps the rose as a frail memorial of her transitory interview with the great philosopher.

This accident, as I have reason to think, was the cause of his henceforth renouncing exercise altogether. All labours, even that of reading, were now performed slowly and with manifest effort; and those which cost him any considerable bodily exertion became very exhausting. His feet refused to do their office more and more; he fell continually, both when moving across the room, and even when standing still; yet he seldom suffered from these falls; and he constantly laughed at them, maintaining that it was impossible he could hurt himself, from the extreme lightness of his person, which was indeed by this time the merest shadow of a man. Very often, especially in the morning, he dropped asleep in his chair from pure weariness and exhaustion: on these occasions he was apt to fall upon the floor, from which he was unable to raise himself up, until accident brought one of his servants or his friends into the room. Afterwards these falls were prevented by substituting a chair with circular supports, that met and clasped in front.

These unseasonable dozings exposed him to another danger. He fell repeatedly, whilst reading, with his head into the candles; a cotton nightcap which he wore was instantly in a blaze, and flaming about his head. Whenever this happened, Kant behaved with great presence of mind. Disregarding the pain, he seized the blazing cap, drew it from his head, laid it quietly on the floor, and trod out the flames with his feet. Yet, as this last act brought his dressing-gown into a dangerous neighbourhood to the flames, I changed the form of his cap, persuaded him

to arrange the candles differently, and had a large vase of water placed constantly by his side; and in this way I applied a remedy to a danger which would else probably have proved fatal to him.

From the sallies of impatience which I have described in the case of the coffee, there was reason to fear that, with the increasing infirmities of Kant, would grow up a general waywardness and obstinacy of temper. For my own sake, therefore, and not less for his, I now laid down one rule for my future conduct in his house: which was, that I would, on no occasion, allow my reverence for him to interfere with the firmest expression of what seemed the just opinion on subjects relating to his own health; and, in cases of great importance, that I would make no compromise with his particular humours, but insist, not only on my view of the case, but also on the practical adoption of my views; or, if this were refused to me, that I would take my departure at once, and not be made responsible for the comfort of a person whom I had no power to influence. And this behaviour on my part it was that won Kant's confidence; for there was nothing which disgusted him so much as any approach to sycophancy or to compliances of timidity. As his imbecility increased, he became daily more liable to mental delusions; and, in particular, he fell into many fantastic notions about the conduct of his servants, and, consequently, sometimes into a peevish mode of treating them. Upon these occasions I generally observed a deep silence. But now and then he would ask me for my opinion; and when this happened, I did not scruple to say, "Ingenuously, then, Mr. Professor, I think that you are in the wrong."—"You think so?" he would reply calmly, at the same time asking for my reasons, which he would listen to with great patience and candour. Indeed, it was evident that the firmest opposition, so long as it rested upon assignable grounds and principles, won upon his regard; whilst his own nobleness of character still moved him to habitual contempt for timorous and partial acquiescence in his opinions, even when his infirmities made him most anxious for such acquiescence.

Earlier in life Kant had been little used to contradiction. His superb understanding, his brilliancy in conversation, founded in part upon his ready and sometimes rather caustic wit, and in part upon his prodigious command of knowledge — the air of noble self-confidence which the consciousness of these advantages impressed upon his manners—and the general acquaint-

ance with the severe purity of his life—all combined to give him a station of superiority to others, which generally secured him from open contradiction. And if it sometimes happened that he met a noisy and intemperate opposition, supported by any pretences to wit, he usually withdrew himself calmly from that sort of unprofitable altercation, by contriving to give such a turn to the conversation as won the general favour of the company to himself, and impressed silence, or modesty at least, upon the boldest disputant. From a person so little familiar with opposition, it could scarcely have been anticipated that he should daily surrender his wishes to mine, if not without discussion, yet always without displeasure. So, however, it was. No habit, of whatever long standing, could be objected to as injurious to his health, but he would generally renounce it. And he had this excellent custom in such cases, that either he would resolutely and at once decide for his own opinion, or, if he professed to follow his friend's, he would follow it sincerely, and not try it unfairly, by trying it imperfectly. Any plan, however trifling, which he had once consented to adopt on the suggestion of another, was never afterwards defeated or embarrassed by unseasonable interposition from his own humours. And thus, the very period of his decay drew forth so many fresh expressions of his character, in its amiable or noble features, as daily increased my affection and reverence for his person.

Having mentioned his servants, I shall here take occasion to give some account of his man-servant Lampe. It was a great misfortune for Kant, in his old age and infirmities, that this man also became old, and subject to a different sort of infirmities. This Lampe had originally served in the Prussian army; on quitting which he entered the service of Kant. In this situation he had lived about forty years; and, though always dull and stupid, had, in the early part of this period, discharged his duties with tolerable fidelity. But latterly, presuming upon his own indispensableness, from his perfect knowledge of all the domestic arrangements, and upon his master's weakness, he had fallen into great irregularities and habitual neglects. Kant had been obliged, therefore, of late to threaten repeatedly that he would discharge him. I, who knew that Kant, though one of the kindest-hearted men, was also one of the firmest, foresaw that this discharge, once given, would be irrevocable: for the word of Kant was as sacred as other men's oaths. Consequently, upon every opportunity I remonstrated with Lampe on the folly of his conduct; and his wife joined me on these occasions. Indeed,

it was high time that a change should be made in some quarter; for it now became dangerous to leave Kant, who was constantly falling from weakness, to the care of an old ruffian, who was himself apt to fall from intoxication. The fact was, that from the moment I undertook the management of Kant's affairs, Lampe saw there was an end to his old system of abusing his master's confidence in pecuniary affairs, and to all the other advantages which he took of his helpless situation. This made him desperate, and he behaved worse and worse; until one morning, in January, 1802, Kant told me, that humiliating as he felt such a confession, the fact was, that Lampe had just treated him in a way which he was ashamed to repeat. I was too much shocked to distress him by inquiring into the particulars. But the result was, that Kant now insisted, temperately but firmly, on Lampe's dismissal. Accordingly, a new servant, named Kaufmann, was immediately engaged; and on the following day Lampe was discharged, with a handsome pension for life.

Here I must mention a little circumstance which does honour to Kant's benevolence. In his last will, on the assumption that Lampe would continue with him to his death, he had made a very liberal provision for him; but upon this new arrangement of the pension, which was to take effect immediately, it became necessary to revoke that part of his will, which he did in a separate codicil, that began thus:—"In consequence of the misbehaviour of my servant Lampe, I think fit," etc. But soon after, considering that such a solemn and deliberate record of Lampe's misconduct might be seriously injurious to his interests, he cancelled the passage, and expressed it in such a way, that no trace remained behind of his just displeasure. And his benign nature was gratified with knowing that, this one sentence being blotted out, there remained no other in all his numerous writings, published or confidential, which spoke the language of anger, or could leave any ground for doubting that he died in charity with all the world. Upon Lampe's calling to demand a written character, he was, however, a good deal embarrassed; Kant's well-known reverence for truth so stern and inexorable being, in this instance, armed against the first impulses of his kindness. Long and anxiously he sat, with the certificate lying before him, debating how he should fill up the blanks. I was present; but in such a matter I did not presume to suggest any advice. At last he took his pen, and filled up the blank as follows:—"—— has served me long and faithfully"—(for Kant was not aware that he had robbed

him)—"but did not display those particular qualifications which fitted him for waiting on an old and infirm man like myself."

This scene of disturbance over, which to Kant, a lover of peace and tranquillity, caused a shock that gladly he would have been spared, it was fortunate that no other of that nature occurred during the rest of his life. Kaufmann, the successor of Lampe, turned out to be a respectable and upright man, and soon conceived a great attachment to his master. Henceforth things wore a new face in Kant's family: by the removal of one of the belligerents, peace was once more restored amongst his servants; for hitherto there had been eternal wars between Lampe and the cook. Sometimes it was Lampe that carried a war of aggression into the cook's territory of the kitchen; sometimes it was the cook that revenged these insults, by sallying out upon Lampe in the neutral ground of the hall, or invaded him even in his own sanctuary of the butler's pantry. The uproars were everlasting; and thus far it was fortunate for the peace of the philosopher, that his hearing had begun to fail; by which means he was spared many an exhibition of hateful passions and ruffian violence, that annoyed his guests and friends. But now all things had changed: deep silence reigned in the pantry; the kitchen rang no more with martial alarums; and the hall was unvexed with skirmish or pursuit. Yet it may be readily supposed that to Kant, at the age of seventy-eight, changes, even for the better, were not welcome: so intense had been the uniformity of his life and habits, that the least innovation in the arrangement of articles as trifling as a penknife or a pair of scissors disturbed him; and not merely if they were pushed two or three inches out of their customary position, but even if they were laid a little awry; and as to larger objects, such as chairs, etc., any dislocation of their usual arrangement, any transposition, or addition to their number, perfectly confounded him; and his eye appeared restlessly to haunt the seat of the mal-arrangement, until the ancient order was restored. With such habits the reader may conceive how distressing it must have been to him, at this period of decaying powers, to adapt himself to a new servant, a new voice, a new step, etc.

Aware of this, I had, on the day before he entered upon his duties, written down for the new servant upon a sheet of paper the entire routine of Kant's daily life, down to the minutest and most trivial circumstances; all which he mastered with the greatest rapidity. To make sure, however, we went through a

rehearsal of the whole ritual; he performing the manœuvres, I looking on, and giving the word. Still I felt uneasy at the idea of his being left entirely to his own discretion on his first *début* in good earnest, and therefore I made a point of attending on this important day; and in the few instances where the new recruit missed the accurate manœuvre, a glance or a nod from me easily made him comprehend his failure.

One part only there was of the daily ceremonial where all of us were at a loss, since it was that part which no mortal eyes had ever witnessed but those of Lampe: this was breakfast. However, that we might do all in our power, I myself attended at four o'clock in the morning. The day happened, as I remember, to be the first of February 1802. Precisely at five Kant made his appearance; and nothing could equal his astonishment on finding me in the room. Fresh from the confusion of dreaming, and bewildered alike by the sight of his new servant, by Lampe's absence, and by my presence, he could with difficulty be made to comprehend the purpose of my visit. A friend in need is a friend indeed; and we would now have given any money to that learned Theban, who could have instructed us in the arrangement of the breakfast-table. But this was a mystery revealed to none but Lampe. At length Kant took this task upon himself; and apparently all was now settled to his satisfaction. Yet still it struck me that he was under some embarrassment or constraint. Upon this I said that, with his permission, I would take a cup of tea, and afterwards smoke a pipe with him. He accepted my offer with his usual courteous demeanour; but seemed unable to familiarise himself with the novelty of his situation. I was at this time sitting directly opposite to him; and at last he frankly told me, but with the kindest and most apologetic air, that he was really under the necessity of begging that I would sit out of his sight; for that, having sat alone at the breakfast-table for considerably more than half a century, he could not abruptly adapt his mind to a change in this respect; and he found his thoughts very sensibly distracted. I did as he desired; the servant retired into an anteroom, where he waited within call; and Kant recovered his wonted composure. Just the same scene passed over again, when I called at the same hour on a fine summer morning some months after.

Henceforth all went right: or, if occasionally some little mistake occurred, Kant showed himself very considerate and indulgent, and would remark spontaneously, that a new servant

could not be expected to know all his ways and humours. In one respect, however, this new man adapted himself to Kant's scholarlike taste in a way which Lampe was incapable of doing. Kant was somewhat fastidious in matters of pronunciation; and Kaufmann had a great facility in catching the true sound of Latin words, the titles of books, and the names or designations of Kant's friends: not one of which accomplishments could Lampe, the most insufferable of blockheads, ever attain to. In particular, I have been told by Kant's old friends, that for the space of thirty-eight years, during which he had been in the habit of reading the newspaper published by Hartung, Lampe delivered it with the same identical blunder on every day of publication:—"Mr. Professor, here is Hart*mann's* journal." Upon which Kant would reply, "Eh! what?—What's that you say? Hartmann's journal? I tell you, it is not Hartmann's, but Hartung's: now, repeat after me—not Hartmann's, but Hartung's." Then Lampe, looking sulky, and drawing himself up with the stiff air of a soldier on guard, and in the very same monotonous tone with which he had been used to sing out his challenge of *Who goes there?* would roar, "not Hartmann's, but Hartung's."—"Now again!" Kant would say: on which again Lampe roared, "Not Hartmann's, but Hartung's."—"Now a third time," cried Kant: on which for a third time the unhappy Lampe would howl out, in truculent despair, "Not Hartmann's, but Hartung's." And this whimsical scene of parade duty was continually repeated: duly as the day of publication came round (viz., twice a week), the irreclaimable old dunce was put through the same manœuvres, which were as invariably followed by the same blunder on the next. So that this incorrigible blockhead must have repeated the same unvarying blunder for a hundred and four times annually (*i.e.*, twice a week), multiplied into thirty-eight, as the number of years. For more than one-half of man's normal life under the scriptural allowance, had this never-enough-to-be-admired old donkey foundered punctually on the same identical rock. In spite, however, of this advantage in the new servant, and a general superiority to his predecessor, Kant's nature was too kind, too good, and too indulgent to all people's infirmities but his own, not to miss the voice and the "old familiar face" that he had been accustomed to for forty years. And I met with what struck me as an affecting instance of Kant's yearning after his old good-for-nothing servant in his memorandum-book: other people record what they wished to remember; but Kant had here recorded what he was to forget.

"Mem.—February, 1802, the name of Lampe must now be remembered no more."

In the spring of this year, 1802, I advised Kant to take the air. It was very long since he had been out of doors,[1] and walking was now out of the question. But I thought that perhaps the motion of a carriage and the air might have a chance of reviving him. On the power of vernal sights and sounds I did not much rely; for these had long ceased to affect him. Of all the changes that spring carries with it, there was one only that now interested Kant; and he longed for it with an eagerness and intensity of expectation, that it became almost painful to witness: this was the return of a little bird (sparrow was it, or robin-redbreast?) that sang in his garden, and before his window. This bird, either the same, or one of a younger generation, had sung for years in the same situation; and Kant grew uneasy when the cold weather, lasting longer than usual, retarded its return. Like Lord Bacon, indeed, he had a child-like love for birds in general; and in particular he took pains to encourage the sparrows to build above the windows of his study; and when this happened (as it often did, from the deep silence which prevailed in the room), he watched their proceedings with the delight and the tenderness which others give to a human interest. To return to the point I was speaking of, Kant was at first very unwilling to adopt my proposal of going abroad. "I shall sink down in the carriage," said he, "and fall together like a heap of old rags." But I persisted with a gentle importunity in urging him to the attempt, assuring him that we would return immediately, if he found the effort too much for him. Accordingly, upon a tolerably warm day of early[2] summer, I and an old friend of Kant's accompanied him to a little place which I rented in the country. As we drove through the streets, Kant was delighted to find that he could sit upright, and bear the motion of the carriage, and seemed to draw youthful pleasure from the sight of the towers and other public buildings, which he had not seen for years. We reached the place of our destination in high spirits. Kant drank a cup of coffee, and attempted

[1] Wasianski here returns thanks to some unknown person, who, having observed that Kant in his latter walks took pleasure in leaning against a particular wall to view the prospect, had caused a seat to be fixed at that point for his use.

[2] Mr. Wasianski says, *late* in summer; but as he elsewhere describes by the same expression as "late in summer" a day which was confessedly *before* the longest day, and as the multitude of birds which continued to sing will not allow us to suppose that the summer could be very far advanced, I have translated accordingly.

to smoke a little. After this, he sat and sunned himself, listening with delight to the carolling of birds, which congregated in great numbers about this spot. He distinguished every bird by its song, and called it by its right name. After staying about half an hour, we set off on our homeward journey, Kant still cheerful, but apparently satiated with his day's enjoyment.

I had on this occasion purposely avoided taking him to any public gardens, that I might not disturb his pleasure by exposing him to the distressing gaze of public curiosity. However, it became known in Königsberg that Kant had gone out; and accordingly, as the carriage moved through the streets which led homewards, there was a general rush from all quarters in that direction; and, when we turned into the street where the house stood, we found it already choked up with people. As we slowly drew up to the door, a lane was formed in the crowd, through which Kant was led, I and my friend supporting him on our arms. Looking at the crowd, I observed the faces of many persons of rank and distinguished strangers, some of whom now saw Kant for the first time, and many of them for the last.

As the winter of 1802-3 approached, he complained more than ever of an affection of the stomach, which no medical man had been able to mitigate, or even to explain. The winter passed over in a complaining way; he was weary of life, and longed for the hour of dismission. "I can be of service to the world no more," said he, "and am a burden to myself." Often I endeavoured to cheer him by the anticipation of excursions that we might make together when summer came again. On these he calculated with so much earnestness, that he had made a regular scale or classification of them—1. Airings; 2. Journeys; 3. Travels. And nothing could equal the yearning impatience expressed for the coming of spring and summer, not so much for their own peculiar attractions, as because they were the seasons for travelling. In his memorandum-book he made this note:—"The three summer months are June, July, and August;" meaning that they were the three months for travelling. And in conversation he expressed the feverish strength of his wishes so plaintively and affectingly, that everybody was drawn into powerful sympathy with him, and wished for some magical means of ante-dating the course of the seasons.

During this winter his bedroom was often warmed. *That* was the room in which he kept his little collection of books, somewhere about four hundred and fifty volumes, chiefly

presentation-copies from the authors. It may seem strange that Kant, who read so extensively, should have no larger library; but he had less need of one than most scholars, having in his earlier years been librarian at the Royal Library of the Castle; and since then, having enjoyed from the liberality of Hartknoch, his publisher (who, in his turn, had profited by the liberal terms on which Kant had made over to him the copyright of his own works), the first sight of every new book that appeared.

At the close of this winter (that is, in 1803), Kant first began to complain of unpleasant dreams, sometimes of very terrific ones, which awakened him in great agitation. Oftentimes melodies, which he had heard in earliest youth sung in the streets of Königsberg, resounded painfully in his ears, and dwelt upon them in a way from which no efforts of abstraction could release him. These kept him awake to unseasonable hours; and sometimes, when after long watching he had fallen asleep, however profound his sleep might be, it was suddenly broken up by terrific dreams, which alarmed him beyond description. Almost every night the bell-rope, which communicated with a bell in the room above his own, where his servant slept, was pulled violently, and with the utmost agitation. No matter how fast the servant might hurry down, he was almost always too late, and was pretty sure to find his master out of bed, and often making his way in terror to some other part of the house. The weakness of his feet exposed him to such dreadful falls on these occasions, that at length (but with much difficulty) I persuaded him to let his servant sleep in the same room with himself.

The morbid affection of the stomach, out of which the dreadful dreams arose, began now to be more and more distressing; and he tried various applications, which he had formerly been loud in condemning, such as a few drops of rum upon a piece of sugar, naphtha,[1] etc. But all these were only palliatives; for his advanced age precluded the hope of a radical cure. His dreams became continually more appalling: single scenes, or passages in these dreams, were sufficient to compose the whole course of mighty tragedies, the impression from which was so profound as to stretch far into his waking hours. Amongst

[1] For Kant's particular complaint, as described by other biographers, a quarter of a grain of opium, every eight hours, would have been the best remedy, perhaps a perfect remedy.

other phantasmata more shocking and indescribable, his dreams constantly represented to him the forms of murderers advancing to his bedside; and so agitated was he by the awful trains of phantoms that swept past him nightly, that in the first confusion of awaking he generally mistook his servant, who was hurrying to his assistance, for a murderer. In the daytime we often conversed upon these shadowy illusions; and Kant, with his usual spirit of stoical contempt for nervous weakness of every sort, laughed at them; and, to fortify his own resolution to contend against them, he wrote down in his memorandum-book, "No surrender now to panics of darkness." At my suggestion, however, he now burned a light in his chamber, so placed as that the rays might be shaded from his face. At first he was very averse to this, though gradually he became reconciled to it. But that he could bear it at all, was to me an expression of the great revolution accomplished by this terrific agency of his dreams. Heretofore, darkness and utter silence were the two pillars on which his sleep rested: no step must approach his room; and as to light, if he saw but a moonbeam penetrating a crevice of the shutters, it made him unhappy; and, in fact, the windows of his bedchamber were barricaded night and day. But now darkness was a terror to him, and silence an oppression. In addition to his lamp, therefore, he had now a repeater in his room. The sound was at first too loud, but means were taken to muffle the hammer; after which both the ticking and the striking became companionable sounds to him.

At this time (spring of 1803) his appetite began to fail, which I thought no good sign. Many persons insist that Kant was in the habit of eating too much for health.[1] I, however, cannot

[1] Who these worthy people were that criticised Kant's eating is not mentioned. They could have had no opportunity for exercising their abilities on this question, except as hosts, guests, or fellow-guests; and, in any of those characters, a gentleman, one would suppose, must feel himself degraded by directing his attention to a point of that nature. However, the merits of the case stand thus between the parties: Kant, it is agreed by all his biographers, ate only once a day; for, as to his breakfast, it was nothing more than a very weak infusion of tea (vide *Jachmann's Letters*, p. 163), with no bread or eatable of any kind. Now, his critics, it is believed, ate their way, from "morn to dewy eve," through the following course of meals: 1. Breakfast early in the morning; 2. Breakfast *à la fourchette* about ten a.m.; 3. Dinner at one or two; 4. Vesper Brod; 5. Abend Brod—all which does really seem a very fair allowance for a man who means to lecture upon abstinence at night. But I shall cut this matter short by stating one plain fact; there were two things, and no more, for which Kant had an inordinate craving during his whole life: these were tobacco and coffee; and from both these he abstained almost altogether,

assent to this opinion; for he ate but once a day, and drank no beer. Of this liquor (I mean the strong black beer) he was, indeed, the most determined enemy. If ever a man died prematurely, Kant would say, "He has been drinking beer, I presume." Or, if another were indisposed, you might be sure he would ask, "But does he drink beer?" And, according to the answer on this point, he regulated his anticipations for the patient. Strong beer, in short, he uniformly maintained to be a slow poison. Voltaire, by the way, had said to a young physician who denounced coffee under the same bad name of a "slow poison," "You're right there, my friend: slow it is, and horribly slow, for I have been drinking it these seventy years, and it has not killed me yet;" but this was an answer which, in the case of beer, Kant would not allow of.

On the 22nd of April 1803, his birthday, the last which he lived to see, was celebrated in a full assembly of his friends. This festival he had long looked forward to with great expectation and delighted even to hear the progress made in the preparations for it. But, when the day came, the over-excitement and tension of expectation seemed to have defeated itself. He tried to appear happy; but the bustle of a numerous company confounded and distressed him, and his spirits were manifestly forced.[1] He seemed first to revive into any real sense of pleasure at night, when the company had departed, and he was undressing in his study. He then talked with much pleasure about the presents which, as usual, would be made to his servants on this occasion; for Kant was never happy himself, unless he saw all around him happy. He was a great maker of presents; but at the same time he had no toleration for the studied theatrical effect, the accompaniment of formal congratulations, and the sentimental pathos, with which birthday presents are made in Germany.[2] In all this, his masculine taste gave him a sense of something *fade* and ludicrous.

merely under a sense of duty, resting probably upon erroneous grounds. Of the first he allowed himself a very small quantity (and everybody knows that temperance is a more difficult virtue than abstinence); of the other, none at all, until the labours of his life were accomplished.

[1] The English reader will here be reminded of Wordsworth's exquisite stanza:

> "But we are press'd by heavy laws;
> And often, glad no more,
> We wear a *face* of joy, because
> We have been glad of yore."

[2] In this, as in many other things, the taste of Kant was entirely English and Roman; as, on the other hand, some eminent Englishmen, I am sorry

The summer of 1803 was now come, and, visiting Kant one day, I was thunderstruck to hear him direct me, in the most serious tone, to provide the funds necessary for an extensive foreign tour. I made no opposition, but asked his reasons for such a plan; he alleged the miserable sensations he had in his stomach, which were no longer endurable. Knowing what power over Kant a quotation from a Roman poet had always possessed, I simply replied, "Post equitem sedet atra cura;" and for the present he said no more. But the touching and pathetic earnestness with which he was continually ejaculating prayers for warmer weather, made it doubtful to me whether his wishes on this point ought not, partially at least, to be gratified; and I therefore proposed to him a little excursion to the cottage we had visited the year before. "Anywhere," said he, "no matter whither, provided it be far enough." Towards the latter end of June, therefore, we executed this scheme. On getting into the carriage, the order of the day with Kant was, "Distance, distance. Only let us go far enough," said he: but scarcely had we reached the city-gates, before the journey seemed already to have lasted too long. On reaching the cottage, we found coffee waiting for us; but he would scarcely allow himself time for drinking it, before he ordered the carriage to the door; and the journey back seemed insupportably long to him, though it was performed in something less than twenty minutes. "Is this never to have an end?" was his continual exclamation; and great was his joy when he found himself once more in his study, undressed, and in bed. And for this night he slept in peace, and once again was liberated from the persecution of dreams.

Soon after he began again to talk of journeys, of travels in remote countries, etc., and, in consequence, we repeated our former excursion several times; and though the circumstances were pretty nearly the same on every occasion, always terminating in disappointment as to the immediate pleasure anticipated, yet, undoubtedly, they were, on the whole, salutary to his spirits.

to say, have, on this very point, shown the effeminacy and *falsetto* taste of the Germans. In particular, Coleridge, describing, in "The Friend," the custom amongst German children of making presents to their parents on Christmas Eve (a custom which he unaccountably supposes peculiar to Ratzeburg), represents the mother as "weeping aloud for joy"—the old idiot of a father with "tears running down his face," etc., etc., and all for what? For a snuff-box, a pencil-case, or some article of jewellery. Now, we English agree with Kant on such maudlin display of stage sentimentality, and are prone to suspect that papa's tears are the product of rum-punch. Tenderness let us have by all means, and the deepest you can imagine, but upon proportionate occasions, and with causes fitted to sustain its dignity.

In particular, the cottage itself, standing under the shelter of tall alders, with a valley silent and solitary stretched beneath it, through which a little brook meandered, broken by a waterfall, whose pealing sound dwelt pleasantly on the ear, sometimes, on a quiet sunny day, gave a lively delight to Kant: and once, under accidental circumstances of summer-clouds and sunlights, the little pastoral landscape suddenly awakened a lively remembrance, which had been long laid asleep, of a heavenly summer morning in youth, which he had passed in a bower upon the banks of a rivulet that ran through the grounds of a dear and early friend, General Von Lossow. The strength of the impression was such, that he seemed actually to be living over that morning again, thinking as he then thought, and conversing with beloved friends that were no more.

His very last excursion was in August of this year (1803), not to my cottage, but to the garden of a friend. On this particular day he manifested great impatience. It had been arranged that he was to meet an old friend at the gardens; and I, with two other gentlemen, attended him. It happened that *our* party arrived first; and thus we had to wait; but only for a few minutes. Such, however, was Kant's weakness, and total loss of power to estimate the duration of time, that, after waiting a few moments, several hours (he fancied) must have elapsed. So that his friend could not be expected. Under this impression he came away, and in great discomposure of mind. And so ended Kant's travelling in this world.

In the beginning of autumn, the sight of his right eye began to fail him; the left he had long lost the use of. This earliest of his losses it is noticeable that he had discovered by mere accident. Sitting down one day to rest himself in the course of a walk, it occurred to him that he would try the comparative strength of his eyes; but, on taking out a newspaper which he had in his pocket, he was surprised to find that with his left eye he could not distinguish a letter. In earlier life he had two remarkable affections of the eyes: once, on returning from a walk, he saw objects double for a long space of time; and twice he became stone-blind. Whether these accidents are to be considered as uncommon, I leave to the decision of oculists. Certain it is, they gave very little disturbance to Kant; who, until old age had lowered the tone of his powers, lived in a constant state of stoical preparation for the worst that could befall him. I was now shocked to think of the degree in which his burdensome

sense of dependence would be aggravated, if he should totally lose the power of sight. Even as it was he read and wrote with great difficulty: in fact, his writing was little better than that which most people can produce as a trial of skill with their eyes shut. From old habits of solitary study, he had no pleasure in hearing others read to him; and he daily distressed me by the pathetic earnestness of his entreaties that I would have a reading glass devised for him. Whatever my own optical skill could suggest I tried, and the best opticians were sent for, to bring their glasses, and take his directions for altering them; but all was to no purpose.

In this last year of his life, Kant very unwillingly received the visits of strangers; and, unless under particular circumstances, wholly declined them. Yet, when travellers had come a very great way out of their road to see him, I confess that I was at a loss how to conduct myself. To have refused too pertinaciously, could not but give me the air of wishing to make myself of importance. And I must acknowledge, that, amongst some few instances of importunity and coarse expressions of low-bred curiosity, I witnessed, pretty generally in all ranks, a most delicate sensibility to the condition of the aged recluse. On sending in their cards, they would usually accompany them by some message, expressive of their unwillingness to gratify their wish to see him, at any risk of distressing him. The fact was, that such visits *did* distress him much; for he felt it a degradation to be exhibited in his helpless state, when he was aware of his own incapacity to meet properly the attention that was paid to him. Some, however, were admitted,[1] according to the circumstances of the case and the accidental state of Kant's spirits at the moment. Amongst these, I remember that we were particularly pleased with M. Otto, the same who signed the treaty of peace between France and England with the present[2] Lord Liverpool (then Lord Hawkesbury). A young Russian also rises to my recollection at this moment, from the excessive (and I think unaffected) enthusiasm which he displayed. On being introduced to Kant, he advanced hastily, took both his hands, and kissed them. Kant, who, from living so much amongst his English friends, had a good deal of the English

[1] To whom it appears that Kant would generally reply, upon their expressing the pleasure it gave them to see him, "In me you behold a poor superannuated, worn-out old man."

[2] "*Present:*"—*i.e.* that Lord Liverpool who was struck by paralysis when Prime Minister to Geo. IV., and has now, for nearly thirty years, been described as *the late* Lord Liverpool.

dignified reserve about him, and hated anything like *scenes*, appeared to shrink a little from this mode of salutation, and was rather embarrassed. However, the young man's manner, I believe, was not at all beyond his genuine feelings; for next day he called again, made some inquiries about Kant's health, was very anxious to know whether his old age was burdensome to him, and, above all things, entreated for some little memorial of the great man to carry away with him. By accident the servant had found a small cancelled fragment of the original MS. of Kant's *Anthropologie:* this, with my sanction, he gave to the Russian; who received it with rapture, kissed it, and then gave to the servant in return the only dollar he had about him; and, thinking that not enough, actually pulled off his coat and waistcoat, and forced them upon the man. Kant, whose native simplicity of character very much indisposed him to sympathy with any extravagances of feeling, could not, however, forbear smiling good-humouredly, on being made acquainted with this instance of *naïveté* and enthusiasm in his young admirer.

I now come to an event in Kant's life which ushered in its closing stage. On the 8th of October 1803, for the first time since his youth, he was seriously ill. When a student at the university, he had once suffered from an ague, which, however, gave way to pedestrian exercise; and in later years he had endured some pain from a contusion on his head; but, with these two exceptions (if they can be considered such), he had never (properly speaking) been ill. At present, the cause of his illness was this: his appetite had latterly been irregular, or rather I should say depraved; and he no longer took pleasure in anything but bread-and-butter and English cheese.[1] On the 7th of October, at dinner he ate little else, in spite of everything that I and another friend then dining with him could urge to dissuade him. For the first time I fancied that he seemed displeased with my importunity, as though I were overstepping the just

[1] Mr. W. here falls into the ordinary mistake of confounding the cause and the occasion, and would leave the impression that Kant (who from his youth up had been a model of temperance) died of sensual indulgence. The cause of Kant's death was clearly the general decay of the vital powers, and in particular the atony of the digestive organs, which must soon have destroyed him under any care or abstinence whatever. This was the cause. The accidental occasion which made the cause operative on the 7th of October, might or might not be what Mr. W. says. But, in Kant's burdensome state of existence, it could not be a question of much importance whether his illness were to date from a 7th of October, or from a 7th of November.

line of my duties. He insisted that the cheese never had done him any harm, nor would now. I had no course left me but to hold my tongue; and he did as he pleased. The consequence was what might have been anticipated—a restless night, succeeded by a day of memorable illness. The next morning all went on as usual, till nine o'clock, when Kant, who was then leaning on his sister's arm, suddenly fell senseless to the ground. A messenger was immediately despatched for me; and I hurried down to his house, where I found him lying on his bed, which had now been removed into his study, speechless and insensible. I had already summoned his physician; but, before he arrived, nature put forth efforts which brought Kant a little to himself. In about an hour he opened his eyes, and continued to mutter unintelligibly until towards the evening when he rallied a little, and began to talk rationally. For the first time in his life, he was now, for a few days, confined to his bed, and ate nothing. On the 12th of October, he again took some refreshment, and would have had his favourite food; but I was now resolved, at any risk of his displeasure, to oppose him firmly. I therefore stated to him the whole consequences of his last indulgence, of all which he manifestly had no recollection. He listened to what I said very attentively, and calmly expressed his conviction that I was perfectly in the wrong; but for the present he submitted. However, some days after, I found that he had been offering a florin for a little bread-and-cheese, and then a dollar, and even more. Being again refused, he complained heavily; but gradually he weaned himself from asking for it, though at times he betrayed involuntarily how much he desired it.

On the 13th of October, his usual dinner parties were resumed, and he was considered convalescent; but it was seldom indeed that he recovered the tone of tranquil spirits which he had preserved until his late attack. Hitherto he had always loved to prolong this meal, the only one he took—or, as he expressed it in classical phrase, "cœnam *ducere;*" but now it was difficult to hurry it over fast enough for his wishes. From dinner, which terminated about two o'clock, he went straight to bed, and at intervals fell into slumbers; from which, however, he was regularly roused up by phantasmata or terrific dreams. At seven in the evening came on duly a period of great distress, which lasted till five or six in the morning—sometimes later; and he continued through the night alternately to walk about and lie down, occasionally tranquil, but more often in great agitation.

It now became necessary that somebody should sit up with him, his man-servant being wearied out with the toils of the day. No person seemed to be so proper for this office as his sister, both as having long received a very liberal pension from him, and also as his nearest relative, who would be the best witness to the fact that her illustrious brother had wanted no comforts or attentions in his last hours which his situation admitted of. Accordingly she was applied to, and undertook to watch him alternately with his footman—a separate table being kept for her, and a very handsome addition made to her allowance. She turned out to be a quiet, gentle-minded woman, who raised no disturbances amongst the servants, and soon won her brother's regard by the modest and retiring style of her manners; I may add, also, by the truly sisterly affection which she displayed towards him to the last.

The 8th of October had grievously affected Kant's faculties, but had not wholly destroyed them. For short intervals the clouds seemed to roll away that had settled upon his majestic intellect, and it shone forth as heretofore. During these moments of brief self-possession, his wonted benignity returned to him; and he expressed his gratitude for the exertions of those about him, and his sense of the trouble they underwent, in a very affecting way. With regard to his man-servant, in particular, he was very anxious that he should be rewarded by liberal presents; and he pressed me earnestly on no account to be parsimonious. Indeed, Kant was nothing less than princely in his use of money; and there was no occasion on which he was known to express the passion of scorn very powerfully, but when he was commenting on mean and penurious acts or habits. Those who knew him only in the streets, fancied that he was not liberal; for he steadily refused, upon principle, to relieve all common beggars. But, on the other hand, he was most liberal to the public charitable institutions; secretly also he assisted his own poor relations in a much ampler way than could reasonably have been expected of him; and it now appeared that he had many other deserving pensioners upon his bounty; a fact that was utterly unknown to any of us, until his increasing blindness and other infirmities devolved the duty of paying these pensions upon myself. It must be recollected, also, that Kant's whole fortune (which, exclusively of his official appointments, did not amount to more than 20,000 dollars) was the product of his own honourable toils for nearly threescore years, and that he had himself suffered all the hardships of poverty in his youth, though he never once

ran into any man's debt; circumstances in his history which, as they express how fully he must have been acquainted with the value of money, greatly enhance the merit of his munificence.

In December 1803, he became incapable of signing his name. His sight, indeed, had for some time failed him so much, that at dinner he could not find his spoon without assistance; and, when I happened to dine with him, I first cut in pieces whatever was on his plate, next put it into a desert-spoon, and then guided his hand to find the spoon. But his inability to sign his name did not arise merely from blindness: the fact was, that, from irretention of memory, he could not recollect the letters which composed his name; and, when they were repeated to him, he could not represent the figure of the letters in his imagination. At the latter end of November, I had remarked that these incapacities were rapidly growing upon him, and in consequence I prevailed on him to sign beforehand all the receipts, etc., which would be wanted at the end of the year; and afterwards, on my representation, to prevent all disputes, he gave me a regular legal power to sign on his behalf.

Much as Kant was now reduced, yet he had occasionally moods of social hilarity. His birthday was always an agreeable subject to him; some weeks before his death, I was calculating the time which it still wanted of that anniversary, and cheering him with the prospect of the rejoicings which would then take place. "All your old friends," said I, "will meet together, and drink a glass of champagne to your health." — "That," said he, "must be done upon the spot;" and he was not satisfied till the party was actually assembled. He drank a glass of wine with them, and, with great elevation of spirits, celebrated by anticipation this birthday which he was destined never to see.

In the latter weeks of his life, however, a great change took place in the tone of his spirits. At his dinner-table, where heretofore such a cloudless spirit of joviality had reigned, there was now a melancholy silence. It disturbed him to see his two dinner companions conversing privately together, whilst he himself sat like a mute on the stage with no part to perform. Yet to have engaged him in the conversation would have been still more distressing, for his hearing was now very imperfect; the effort to hear was itself painful to him; and his expressions, even when his thoughts were accurate enough, became nearly unintelligible. It is remarkable, however, that at the very lowest point of his depression, when he became perfectly incapable of conversing with any rational meaning on the ordinary

affairs of life, he was still able to answer correctly and distinctly, in a degree that was perfectly astonishing, upon any question of philosophy or of science, especially of physical geography, chemistry, or natural history. He talked satisfactorily, in his very worst state, of the gases, and stated very accurately different propositions of Kepler's, especially the law of their planetary motions. And I remember, in particular, that upon the very last Monday of his life, when the extremity of his weakness moved a circle of his friends to tears, and he sat amongst us insensible to all we could say to him, cowering down, or rather, I might say, collapsing into a shapeless heap upon his chair, deaf, blind, torpid, motionless—even then I whispered to the others, that I would engage that Kant should take his part in conversation with propriety and animation. This they found it difficult to believe. Upon which I drew close to his ear, and put a question to him about the Moors of Barbary. To the surprise of everybody but myself, he immediately gave us a summary account of their habits and customs; and told us, by the way, that in the word *Algiers* the g ought to be pronounced hard (as in the English word *gear*).

During the last fortnight of Kant's life, he busied himself unceasingly in a way that seemed not merely purposeless, but self-contradictory. Twenty times in a minute he would unloose and tie his neck-handkerchief; so also with a sort of belt which he wore about his dressing-gown; the moment it was clasped, he unclasped it with impatience, and was then equally impatient to have it clasped again. But no description can convey an adequate impression of the weary restlessness with which from morning to night he pursued these labours of Sisyphus—doing and undoing—fretting that he could not do it, fretting that he had done it.

By this time he seldom knew any of us who were about him, but took us all for strangers. This happened first with his sister, then with me, and finally with his servant. Such an alienation from us all distressed me more than any other instance of his decay: though I knew that he had not really withdrawn his affection from me, yet his air and mode of addressing me gave me constantly that feeling. So much the more affecting was it, when the sanity of his perceptions and his remembrances returned, but at intervals of slower and slower recurrence. In this condition, silent or babbling childishly, self-involved and torpidly abstracted, or else busy with self-created phantoms and delusions, waking up for a moment to trifles, sinking back for hours to what might perhaps be disjointed fragments of

grand perishing reveries, what a contrast did he offer to *that* Kant who had once been the brilliant centre of the most brilliant circles for rank, wit, or knowledge, that Prussia afforded! A distinguished person from Berlin, who had called upon him during the preceding summer, was greatly shocked at his appearance, and said, "This is not Kant that I have seen, but the shell of Kant!" How much more would he have said this, if he had seen him now.

For now came February, 1804, which was the last month that Kant was destined to see. It is remarkable that, in the memorandum-book which I have before mentioned, I found a fragment of an old song (inserted by Kant, and dated in the summer about six months before the time of his death), which expressed that February was the month in which people had the least weight to carry, for the obvious reason that it was shorter by two and by three days than the others; and the concluding sentiment was in a tone of fanciful pathos to this effect—"Oh, happy February! in which man has least to bear—least pain, least sorrow, least self-reproach!" Even of this short month, however, Kant had not twelve entire days to bear, for it was on the twelfth that he died; and, in fact, he may be said to have been dying from the first. He now barely vegetated; though there were still transitory gleams flashing fitfully from the embers of his ancient magnificent intellect.

On the 3rd of February the springs of life seemed to be ceasing from their play; for from this day, strictly speaking, he ate nothing more. His existence henceforward seemed to be the mere prolongation of an impetus derived from an eighty years' life, after the moving power of the mechanism was withdrawn. His physician visited him every day at a particular hour; and it was settled that I should always be there to meet him. Nine days before his death, on paying his usual visit, the following little circumstance occurred, which affected us both, by recalling forcibly to our minds the ineradicable courtesy and goodness of Kant's nature. When the physician was announced, I went up to Kant, and said to him, "Here is Dr. A——." Kant rose from his chair, and, offering his hand to the doctor, murmured something in which the word "posts" was frequently repeated, but with an air as though he wished to be helped out with the rest of the sentence. Dr. A——, who thought that, by *posts*, he meant the stations for relays of post-horses, and therefore that his mind was wandering, replied, that all the horses were

engaged, and begged him to compose himself. But Kant went t
on, with great effort to himself, and added, "Many posts, heavy
posts—then much goodness—then much gratitude." All this s
he said with apparent incoherence, but with great warmth, and
increasing self-possession. I meantime perfectly divined what t
it was that Kant, under his cloud of imbecility, wished to say,
and I interpreted accordingly. "What the professor wishes s
to say, Dr. A——, is this, that, considering the many and
weighty posts which you fill in the city and in the university,
it argues great goodness on your part to give up so much of
your time to him" (for Dr. A—— would never take any fees
from Kant); "and that he has the deepest sense of this good-
ness."—"Right," said Kant, earnestly—"right!" But he still
continued to stand, and was nearly sinking to the ground.
Upon which I remarked to the physician, that Kant, as I was
well convinced, would not sit down, however much he suffered
from standing, until he knew that his visitors were seated. The
doctor seemed to doubt this; but Kant, who heard what I said,
by a prodigious effort confirmed my construction of his conduct,
and spoke distinctly these words—"God forbid I should be
sunk so low as to forget the offices of humanity."

When dinner was announced, Dr. A—— took his leave.
Another guest had now arrived, and I was in hopes, from the
animation which Kant had so recently displayed, that we should
to-day have a pleasant party; but my hopes were vain—Kant
was more than usually exhausted; and, though he raised a
spoon to his mouth, he swallowed nothing. For some time
everything had been tasteless to him; and I had endeavoured,
but with little success, to stimulate the organs of taste by nut-
meg, cinnamon, etc. To-day all failed, and I could not prevail
upon him to taste even a biscuit, rusk, or anything of that sort.
I had once heard him say that several of his friends, whose
complaint was *marasmus*, had closed their illness by four or
five days of entire freedom from pain, but totally without
appetite, and then slumbered tranquilly away. Through this
state I apprehended that he was himself now passing.

Saturday, the 4th of February, I heard his guests loudly
expressing their fears that they should never meet him again;
and I could not but share these fears myself. However, on

Sunday, the 5th, I dined at his table in company with his
particular friend Mr. R. R. V. Kant was still present, but so
weak that his head drooped upon his knees, and he sank down
against the right side of the chair. I went and arranged his

pillows, so as to raise and support his head: and, having done this, I said, "Now, my dear sir, you are again in right order." Great was our astonishment when he answered clearly and audibly, in the Roman military phrase, "Yes, *testudine et facie*;" and immediately after added, "Ready for the enemy, and in battle array." His powers of mind were smouldering away in their ashes; but every now and then some lambent flame, or grand emanation of light, shot forth, to make it evident that the ancient fire still slumbered below.

Monday, the 6th, he was much weaker and more torpid: he spoke not a word except on the occasion of my question about the Moors, as previously stated, and sat with sightless eyes, lost in himself, and manifesting no sense of our presence, so that we had the feeling of some mighty phantom from some forgotten century being seated amongst us.

About this time, Kant had become much more tranquil and composed. In the earlier periods of his illness, when his yet unbroken strength was brought into active conflict with the first attacks of decay, he was apt to be peevish, and sometimes spoke roughly or even harshly to his servants. This, though very opposite to his natural disposition, was altogether excusable under the circumstances. He could not make himself understood: things were therefore brought to him continually which he had not asked for; and what he really wanted oftentimes he could not obtain, because all his efforts to name it were unintelligible. A violent nervous irritation, besides, affected him, from the unsettling of the equilibrium in the different functions of his nature; weakness in one organ being made more palpable to him by disproportionate strength in another. But at length the strife was finished; the whole system was thoroughly undermined, and now moving forward in rapid and harmonious progress to dissolution. From this time till all was over, no movement of impatience, or expression of fretfulness, ever escaped him.

I now visited him three times a day; and on

Tuesday, February 7, going about dinner-time, I found the usual party of friends sitting down alone; for Kant was in bed. This was a new scene in *his* house, and increased our fears that his end was close at hand. However, having seen him rally so often, I would not run the risk of leaving him without a dinner-party for the next day; and accordingly, at the customary hour of one, we assembled in his house on

Wednesday, February 8. I paid my respects to him as cheerfully as possible, and ordered dinner to be served. Kant

sat at the table with us; and, taking a spoon with a little soup in it, carried it to his lips, but immediately put it down again, and retired to bed, from which he never rose again.

Thursday, the 9th, he had sunk into the weakness of a dying person, and the corpse-like appearance (*the facies Hippocratica*) had already taken possession of him. I visited him frequently through the course of the day; and going for the last time about ten o'clock at night, I found him in a state of insensibility. I could not draw any sign from him that he knew me, and I left him to the care of his sister and his servant.

Friday, the 10th, I went to see him at six o'clock in the morning. It was very stormy, and a deep snow had fallen in the night-time. And, by the way, I remember that a gang of house-breakers had forced their way through the premises, in order to reach Kant's next neighbour, who was a goldsmith. As I drew near to his bedside, I said, "Good-morning." He returned my salutation, by saying, "Good-morning," but in so feeble and faltering a voice that it was hardly articulate. I was rejoiced to find him sensible, and I asked him if he knew me.—"Yes," he replied; and, stretching out his hand, touched me gently upon the cheek. Through the rest of the day, whenever I visited him, he seemed to have relapsed into a state of insensibility.

Saturday, the 11th, he lay with fixed and rayless eyes; but to all appearance in perfect peace. I asked him again, on this day, if he knew me. He was speechless, but he turned his face towards me, and made signs that I should kiss him.[1] Deep

[1] "*That I should kiss him:*"—The pathos which belongs to such a mode of final valediction is dependent altogether for its effect upon the contrast between itself and the prevailing tone of manners amongst the society where such an incident occurs. In some parts of the Continent there prevailed during the last century a most effeminate practice amongst *men* of exchanging kisses as a regular mode of salutation on meeting after any considerable period of separation. Under such a standard of manners, the farewell kiss of the dying could have no special effect of pathos. But in nations so inexorably manly as the English, any act, which for the moment seems to depart from the usual standard of manliness, becomes exceedingly impressive when it recalls the spectator's thoughts to the mighty power which has been able to work such a revolution—the power of death in its final agencies. The brave man has ceased to be in any exclusive sense a man: he has become an infant in his weakness: he has become a woman in his craving for tenderness and pity. Forced by agony, he has laid down his sexual character, and retains only his generic character of a human creature. And he that is manliest amongst the bystanders, is also the readiest to sympathise with this affecting change. Ludlow, the parliamentary general of horse, a man of iron nerves, and peculiarly hostile to all scenical displays of sentiment, mentions, nevertheless, in his *Memoirs*, with sympathising tenderness, the case of a cousin—that, when lying mortally wounded on the ground, and feeling his life to be rapidly welling away, entreated his relative to dismount "and kiss him." Everybody

emotion thrilled me as I stooped down to kiss his pallid lips; for I knew that in this solemn act of tenderness he meant to express his thankfulness for our long friendship, and to signify his last farewell. I had never seen him confer this mark of his love upon anybody except once, and that was a few weeks before his death, when he drew his sister to him and kissed her. The kiss which he now gave to me was the last memorial that he knew me.

Whatever fluid was now offered to him passed the œsophagus with a rattling sound, as often happens with dying people; and there were all the signs of death being close at hand.

I wished to stay with him till all was over; and, as I had been amongst the nearest witnesses of his life, to be witness also of his departure; and, therefore, I never quitted him, except when I was called off for a few minutes to attend some private business. The whole of this night I spent at his bedside. Though he had passed the day in a state of insensibility, yet in the evening he made intelligible signs that he wished to have his bed put in order; he was therefore lifted out in our arms, and the bedclothes and pillows being hastily arranged, he was carried back again. He did not sleep; and a spoonful of liquid, which was sometimes put to his lips, he usually pushed aside; but about one o'clock in the night he himself made a movement towards the spoon, from which I collected that he was thirsty; and I gave him a small quantity of wine and water sweetened; but the muscles of his mouth had not strength enough to retain it; so that, to prevent its flowing back, he raised his hand to his lips, until with a rattling sound it was swallowed. He seemed to wish for more; and I continued to give him more, until he said, in a way that I was just able to understand, "It is enough."[1] And these were his last words. It is enough! Sufficit! Mighty and symbolic words! At intervals he pushed away the bedclothes, and exposed his person; I constantly restored the

must remember the immortal scene on board the *Victory*, at four p.m. on October 21, 1805, and the farewell, "*Kiss me, Hardy!*" of the mighty admiral. And here again, in the final valediction of the stoical Kant, we read another indication, speaking oracularly from dying lips of natures the sternest, that the last necessity—that call which survives all others in men of noble and impassioned hearts—is the necessity of love, is the call for some relenting caress, such as may stimulate for a moment some phantom image of female tenderness in an hour when the actual presence of females is impossible.

[1] "*It is enough:*"—The cup of life, the cup of suffering, is drained. For those who watch, as did the Greek and the Roman, the deep meanings that oftentimes hide themselves (without design and without consciousness on the part of the utterer) in trivial phrases, this final utterance would have seemed intensely symbolic.

clothes to their situation, and on one of these occasions I found that the whole body and extremities were already growing cold, and the pulse intermitting.

At a quarter after three o'clock on Sunday morning, February 12, 1804, Kant stretched himself out as if taking up a position for his final act, and settled into the precise posture which he preserved to the moment of death. The pulse was now no longer perceptible to the touch in his hands, feet, or neck. I tried every part where a pulse beats, and found none but in the left hip, where it continued to beat with violence, but often intermitted.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon he suffered a remarkable change; his eye was rigid, and his face and lips became discoloured by a cadaverous pallor. Still, such was the intensity of his constitutional habits, that no trace appeared of the cold sweat which naturally accompanies the last mortal agony.

It was near eleven o'clock when the moment of dissolution approached. His sister was standing at the foot of the bed, his sister's son at the head. I, for the purpose of still observing the fluctuations in the pulse, was kneeling at the bedside; and I called his servant to come and witness the death of his good master. The last agony was now advancing to its close, if *agony* it could be called, where there seemed to be no struggle. And precisely at this moment, his distinguished friend Mr. R. R. V., whom I had summoned by a messenger, entered the room. First of all, the breath grew feebler; then it missed its regularity of return; then it wholly intermitted, and the upper lip was slightly convulsed; after this there followed one feeble respiration or sigh; and after that no more; but the pulse still beat for a few seconds—slower and fainter, slower and fainter, till it ceased altogether; the mechanism stopped; the last motion was at an end; and exactly at that moment the clock struck eleven.

. . . . . .

Soon after his death the head of Kant was shaved; and, under the direction of Professor Knorr, a plaster cast was taken, not a mask merely, but a cast of the whole head, designed (I believe) to enrich the craniological collection of Dr. Gall.

The corpse being laid out and properly attired, immense numbers of people in every rank, from the highest to the lowest, flocked to see it. Everybody was anxious to avail himself of the last opportunity he would have for entitling himself to say, "I too have seen Kant." This went on for many days, during which, from morning to night, the house was thronged with the public. Great was the astonishment of all people at the meagre-

ness of Kant's appearance; and it was universally agreed that a corpse so wasted and fleshless had never been beheld. His head rested upon the same cushion on which once the gentlemen of the university had presented an address to him; and I thought that I could not apply it to a more honourable purpose than by placing it in the coffin, as the final pillow of that immortal head.

Upon the style and mode of his funeral, Kant had expressed his wishes in earlier years by a special memorandum. He there desired that it should take place early in the morning, with as little noise and disturbance as possible, and attended only by a few of his most intimate friends. Happening to meet with this memorandum, whilst I was engaged at his request in arranging his papers, I very frankly gave him my opinion, that such an injunction would lay me, as the executor of his will, under great embarrassments; for that circumstances might very probably arise under which it would be next to impossible to carry it into effect. Upon this Kant tore the paper, and left the whole to my own discretion. The fact was, I foresaw that the students of the university would never allow themselves to be robbed of this occasion for expressing their veneration by a public funeral. The event showed that I was right; for a funeral such as Kant's, one so solemn and so magnificent, the city of Königsberg has never witnessed before or since. The public journals, and separate reports in pamphlets, etc., have given so minute an account of its details, that I shall here notice only the heads of the ceremony.

On the 28th of February, at two o'clock in the afternoon, all the dignitaries of church and state, not only those resident in Königsberg, but from the remotest parts of Prussia, assembled in the church of the castle. Hence they were escorted by the whole body of the university, splendidly dressed for the occasion, and by many military officers of rank, with whom Kant had always been a great favourite, to the house of the deceased professor; from which the corpse was carried by torchlight, the bells of every church in Königsberg tolling, to the cathedral, which was lit up by innumerable wax-lights. A never-ending train of people followed it on foot. In the cathedral, after the usual burial rites, accompanied with every possible expression of national veneration to the deceased, there was a grand musical service, most admirably performed; at the close of which, Kant's mortal remains were lowered into the academic vault; and there he now rests among the patriarchs of the university. PEACE BE TO HIS DUST; AND TO HIS MEMORY EVERLASTING HONOUR!

MODERN SUPERSTITION

It is said continually, that the age of the miraculous and supernatural is past. I deny that it is so in any sense which implies this age to differ from all other generations of man except one. It is neither past, nor ought we to wish it past. Superstition is no vice, absolute and unconditional, in the constitution of man. It is or it is not a vice according to the particular law of its development. It is not true that, in any philosophic view, *primus in orbe deos fecit timor*. As Burke objected—if fear created the gods, what created the fear? Far more true, and more just to the grandeur of man, it would have been to say—*Primus in orbe deos fecit sensus infiniti*. Even for the lowest Caffre, more goes to the sense of a divine being, than simply his wrath or his power. Superstition, indeed, in the sense of sympathy with the invisible, is the great test of man's grandeur, as an earthly combining with a celestial. In superstition lies the possibility of religion. And hence the obstinate interfusion of the two ideas in the Roman word *Religio*. And though superstition is often injurious, degrading, demoralising, it is so, not as a form of corruption or degradation, but as a form of non-development. The crab is harsh, and for itself worthless. But it is the germinal form of innumerable finer fruits. Superstition will finally pass into pure forms of religion as man advances. It would be matter of lamentation to hear that superstition had at all decayed, until man had made corresponding steps in the purification and development of his intellect as applicable to religious faith. In order to appreciate the present condition of the supernatural, and its power over man, let us throw a hasty eye over the modes of popular superstition. If these manifest their vitality, it will prove that the popular intellect does not go along with the bookish or the worldly intellect (philosophic we cannot call it), in pronouncing the power of the supernatural extinct. The popular feeling is all in all.

That function of miraculous power, which, though widely diffused through Pagan and Christian ages alike, has the least root in the solemnities of the imagination, we may call the

Ovidian. By way of distinction, it may be so called on a principle of convenience; and it may be so called on a principle of equity; since Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* made the first elaborate display of such a tendency in human superstition. It is a movement of superstition under the domination of human affections; a mode of spiritual awe, not remarkably profound, which seeks to reconcile itself with human tenderness or admiration; and which represents supernatural power as expressing itself by a sympathy with human distress or passion concurrently with human sympathies, and as supporting that blended sympathy by a symbol incarnated with the fixed agencies of nature. For instance, a pair of youthful lovers perish by a double suicide originating in a fatal mistake, and a mistake operating in each case through a noble self-oblivion. The tree under which their meeting has been concerted, and which witnesses their tragedy, is supposed ever afterwards to express the divine sympathy with this catastrophe in the gloomy colour of its fruit:—

> "At tu, quæ ramis (arbor!) miserabile corpus
> Nunc tegis unius, mox es tectura duorum,
> Signa tene cædis:—pullosque et luctibus aptos
> Semper habe fructus—gemini monumenta cruoris."

Such is the dying adjuration of the lady to the tree. And the fruit becomes thenceforwards a monument of a double sympathy —sympathy from man, sympathy from a dark power standing behind the agencies of nature, and speaking through them. Meantime the object of this sympathy is understood to be, not the individual catastrophe, but the universal case of unfortunate love exemplified in this particular romance. The inimitable grace with which Ovid has delivered these early traditions of human tenderness, blended with human superstition, is notorious; the artfulness of the pervading connection, by which every tale in the long succession is made to arise spontaneously out of that which precedes, is absolutely unrivalled; and this it was, together with his luxuriant gaiety, which procured for him a preference even on the part of Milton—a poet so opposite by intellectual constitution. It is but reasonable, therefore, that this function of the supernatural should bear the name of *Ovidian.* Pagan it was it its birth; and to Paganism its titles ultimately ascend. Yet we know that in the transitional state through the centuries succeeding to Christ, during which Paganism and Christianity were slowly descending and ascending, as if through different strata of the atmosphere, the two powers

interchanged whatsoever they could. (See Conyers Middleton; and see Blount of our own days.) It marked the feeble nature of Paganism, that it could borrow little or nothing: by organisation it was fitted to no expansion. But the true faith, from its vast and comprehensive adaptation to the nature of man, lent itself to many corruptions (*corruptio optimi est pessima*), some deadly in their tendencies, some harmless. Amongst these last was the Ovidian form of connecting the unseen powers moving in nature with human sympathies of love or reverence. The legends of this kind are universal and endless. No land, the most austere in its Protestantism, but has adopted these superstitions: and everywhere, by those even who reject them, they are entertained with some degree of affectionate respect. That the ass, which in its very degradation still retains an under-power of sublimity,[1] or of sublime suggestion through its ancient connection with the wilderness, with the Orient, with Jerusalem, should have been honoured amongst all animals by the visible impression upon its back of Christian symbols—seems reasonable even to the infantine understanding, when made acquainted with its meekness, its patience, its suffering life, and its association with the Founder of Christianity in one great triumphal solemnity. The very man who brutally abuses it, and feels a hard-hearted contempt for its misery and its submission, has a semi-conscious feeling that the same qualities were possibly those which recommended it to a distinction,[2] when all things were valued upon a scale inverse to that of the world. Certain it is, that in all Christian lands the legend about the ass is current

[1] "*An under-power of sublimity:*"—Everybody knows that Homer compared the Telamonian Ajax, in a moment of heroic endurance, to an ass. This, however, was only under a momentary glance from a peculiar angle of the case. But the Mahometan, too solemn, and also perhaps too stupid, to catch the fanciful or shifting and angular colours of things, absolutely by choice, under the Bagdad Caliphate, decorated a most favourite hero with the title of the *Ass*—which title is repeated with veneration to this day. Still it should not be forgotten that the *wild* ass is one of the few animals which has the reputation of never flying from an enemy.

[2] "*Which recommended it to a distinction:*"—It might be objected that the oriental ass was often a superb animal; that it is spoken of prophetically as such; and that historically the Syrian ass is made known to us as having been used in the prosperous ages of Judea for the riding of princes. But this is no objection. Those circumstances in the history of the ass were requisite to establish its symbolic propriety in a great symbolic pageant of triumph. Whilst, on the other hand, the individual animal, there is good reason to think, was marked by all the qualities of the general race as a suffering and unoffending tribe in the animal creation. The asses on which princes rode were of a separate colour, of peculiar breed, and improved, like the English racer, by continual care. "Speak ye who ride upon *white* asses!" is the scriptural expression: *i.e.* speak ye who are of princely rank.

amongst the rural population. The haddock, again, amongst marine animals, is supposed, throughout all maritime Europe, to be a privileged fish; even in austere Scotland, every child can point out the impression of St. Peter's thumb, by which from age to age it is distinguished from fishes having otherwise an external resemblance. To the same apostle (with a reference, doubtless, to St. Matthew, chap. 14, St. Mark, chap. 6, St. Luke, chap. 8, and St. John, chap. 6) is consecrated another memorial of the sea, and of the sea in a state of storm; viz., that well-known storm-bird which, from the apostle's name *Peter*, is named the stormy *petrel*. All domesticated cattle, having the benefit of man's guardianship and care, are believed (or once *were* believed), throughout England and Germany, to go down upon their knees at one particular moment of Christmas Eve, when the fields are covered with darkness, when no eye looks down but that of God, and when the exact anniversary hour revolves of that angelic song, once rolling over the fields and flocks of Palestine.[1] The Glastonbury Thorn is a mere local superstition; but at one time the legend was as widely diffused as that of Loretto, with the angelic translation of its sanctities: on Christmas morning, it was devoutly believed by all Christendom that this holy thorn put forth its annual blossoms. And with respect to the aspen-tree, which Mrs. Hemans very naturally mistook for a Welsh legend, having first heard it in Denbighshire, the popular faith is universal—not Welsh, but European[2]—that it shivers mystically in sympathy with the horror of that mother tree in Palestine which was *compelled* to furnish materials for the cross. Neither would it in this case be any objection, if a passage were produced from Solinus or Theophrastus, implying that the aspen-tree had always shivered; for the tree might presumably be penetrated by remote presentiments, as well as by remote remembrances. In so vast a case, the obscure

[1] Mahometanism, which everywhere pillages Christianity, cannot but have its own face at times glorified by its stolen jewels. This solemn hour of jubilation, gathering even the brutal natures into its fold, recalls accordingly the Mahometan legend (which the reader may remember is one of those incorporated into Southey's "Thalaba") of a great hour revolving once in every year, during which the gates of Paradise were thrown open to their utmost extent, and gales of happiness issued forth upon the total family of man.

[2] "*European:*"—Or, more strictly speaking, co-extensive with Christendom, which is *now* a much wider expression; for, whilst less than two millions are to be subtracted on account of the Ottoman Mussulmans, two millions must be added on account of Asiatics (viz. the Armenians, etc.), twenty-two millions for the United States; two millions for Canada and other English possessions; seven or eight millions for Spanish and Portuguese America.

sympathy should stretch, Janus-like, each way. And an objection of the same kind to the rainbow, considered as the seal by which God ratified his covenant in bar of all future deluges, may be parried in something of the same way. It was not then first created; optical laws imply that the rainbow must, under preconditions of sunshine and rain, always have displayed the same series of phenomena—true: but it was then first selected by preference, amongst a multitude of natural signs as yet unappropriated, and then first charged with the new function of a message and a promise to man. Pretty much the same theory —that is, the same way of accounting for the natural existence without disturbing the supernatural functions—may be applied to the great constellation of the other hemisphere, called the Southern Cross. It is viewed popularly in South America as the great banner, or gonfalon, held aloft by heaven before the Spanish heralds of the true faith in 1492. To that superstitious and ignorant race it costs not an effort to suppose, that, by some synchronising miracle, the constellation had been then specially called into existence at the very moment when the first Christian procession, bearing a cross in their arms, solemnly stepped on shore from the vessels of Christendom. We Protestants know better: we understand the impossibility of supposing such a narrow and local reference in orbs so transcendently vast as those composing the constellation—orbs removed from each other by such unvoyageable worlds of space, and having, in fact, no real reference to each other more than to any other heavenly bodies whatsoever. That unity of synthesis, by which they are composed into one figure of a cross, we know to be a mere accidental result from an arbitrary synthesis of human fancy, and dependent also to a certain extent upon the accidents of our own earthly position and distance. A vast diminution, for example, of this distance, by calling other stars into our field of vision, and by thus filling up the intervals between the several elements of the figure, would disturb (and might even wholly confuse) the present cruciform arrangement. Take such and such stars, compose them into letters, and they will spell such a word. But still it was our own choice, a synthesis of our own fancy, originally to combine them in this way. They might be divided from each other, and otherwise combined. All this is true: and yet, as the combination, though in a partial sense arbitrary, does spontaneously offer itself [1] to every eye,

[1] "*Does spontaneously offer itself:*"—Heber (Bishop of Calcutta) complains that this constellation is not composed of stars answering his

as the glorious cross does really glitter for ever through the silent hours of a vast hemisphere, even they who are not superstitious may willingly yield to the belief—that, as the rainbow was laid in the very elements and necessities of nature, yet still bearing a pre-dedication to a service which would not be called for until many ages had passed, so also the mysterious cipher of man's imperishable hopes may have been entwined and enwreathed with the starry heavens from their earliest creation, as a prefiguration — as a silent heraldry of mysterious hope through one period, and as a heraldry of gratitude through the other.

These cases which I have been rehearsing, taking them in the fullest literality, agree in this general point of union—they are all silent incarnations of miraculous power—miracles, supposing them to have been such originally, locked up and embodied in the regular course of nature, just as we see lineaments of faces and of forms in petrifactions, in variegated marbles, in spars, or in rocky strata, which our fancy interprets as once having been real human existences; but which are now confounded with the very substance of a mineral product.[1] Even those who are most superstitious, therefore, look upon cases of this order as occupying a midway station between the physical and hyperphysical, between the regular course of nature and the providential interruption of that course. The stream of the miraculous is here confluent with the stream of the natural. By such legends, the credulous man finds his superstition but little evoked; the incredulous finds his philosophy but little revolted. Both alike will be willing to admit, for instance, that the apparent act of reverential thanksgiving, in certain birds, when drinking, is caused and supported by a physiological arrangement; and yet, perhaps, both alike would bend so far to the legendary faith as to allow a child to believe, and would perceive a pure child-like beauty in believing, that the bird was thus rendering a homage of deep thankfulness to the universal Father, who watches for the safety of sparrows, and sends his rain upon the just and upon the unjust. In short, the faith in this order of the physico-miraculous is open alike to the sceptical and the non-sceptical: it is touched superficially with the colouring of superstition, with its tenderness, its humility, its

expectation in point of magnitude. But he admits that the dark barren space around it gives to this inferior magnitude a very advantageous relief.

[1] See upon this subject some interesting speculations (or at least dim outlines and suggestions of speculations) by the German author, Novalis (the Graf von Hardenberg).

thankfulness, its awe; but, on the other hand, it is not therefore tainted with its coarseness, with its childishness, with its paralytic credulity. In no subject is the difference between the childish and the child-like more touchingly brought forward, than occasionally in the religious legends of early and of militant Christianity. Such a faith reposes upon the universal signs diffused through nature, and blends with the mysterious of natural grandeurs wherever found—with the mysterious of the starry heavens, with the mysterious of music, and with that infinite form of the mysterious for man's dimmest misgivings—

"Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns."

But, from this earliest note in the ascending scale of superstitious faith, let us pass to a more alarming key. This first, which I have styled (in equity as well as for distinction) the *Ovidian*, is too aerial, almost too allegoric, to be susceptible of much terror. It is the mere *fancy*, in a mood half-playful, half-tender, which submits to the belief. It is the feeling, the sentiment, which creates the faith; not the faith which creates the feeling. And thus far we see that modern feeling and Christian feeling has been to the full as operative as any that is peculiar to Paganism; judging by the Romish *Legenda*, much more so. The Ovidian illustrations, under a false superstition, are entitled to give the designation, as being the first, the earliest, but not at all as the richest. Besides that Ovid's illustrations emanated often from himself individually, not from the popular mind of his country; whereas ours of the same class uniformly repose on large popular traditions from the whole of Christian antiquity. These again are agencies of the supernatural which can never have a private or personal application; they belong to all mankind and to all generations. But the next in order are more solemn; they become terrific by becoming personal. These comprehend all that vast body of the marvellous which is expressed by the word *Ominous*. On this head, as dividing itself into the ancient and modern, I will speak next.

Everybody is aware of the deep emphasis which the Pagans laid upon words and upon names, under this aspect of the ominous. The name of several places was formally changed by the Roman government, solely with a view to that contagion of evil which was thought to lurk in the syllables, if taken significantly. Thus, the town of Maleventum (Ill-come, as one might render it) had its name changed by the Romans to Beneventum (or Welcome). *Epidamnum*, again, the Grecian

Calais, as one might call it, in relation to the Roman Dover of Brundusium, was a name that would have startled the stoutest-hearted Roman "from his propriety." Had he suffered this name to escape him inadvertently, his spirits would have forsaken him—he might even have pined away under dim misgivings of evil, like a poor negro of Koromantyn who is the victim of Obi.[1] Read into a Greek word, which it really was, the name imported no ill; but for a Roman to say *Ibo Epidamnum*, reading the word *damnum* into a Roman sense, was in effect saying, though in a hybrid dialect, half-Greek, half-Roman, "I will go to ruin." The name was therefore changed to Dyrrachium; a substitution which quieted more anxieties in Roman hearts than the erection of a lighthouse or the deepening of the harbour mouth. A case equally strong, to take one out of many hundreds that have come down to us, is reported by Livy. There was an officer in a Roman legion, at some period of the republic, who bore the name either of Atrius Umber or Umbrius Ater: and this man being ordered on some expedition, the soldiers refused to follow him. They did right. I remember, and have elsewhere mentioned, that Coleridge used facetiously to call the well-known sister of Dr. Aikin, Mrs. Barbauld, "that pleonasm of nakedness," the idea of nakedness being reduplicated and reverberated in the *bare* and the *bald*. This Atrius Umber might be called "that pleonasm of darkness;" and one might say to him, in the words of Othello, "What needs this iteration?" To serve under the Gloomy was enough to darken the spirit of hope; but to serve under the Black Gloomy was really rushing upon destruction. Yet it may be alleged that Captain Death was a favourite and heroic leader in the English navy; and that, in our own times, Admiral Coffin, though an American by birth, has not been unpopular in the same service. This is true: and all that can be said is, that these names were two-edged swords, which might be made to tell against the enemy as well as against friends. And possibly the Roman centurion might have turned his name to the same account, had he possessed the great Dictator's presence of mind; for he, the mighty Julius, when landing in Africa, having happened to stumble—an omen of the worst character, in Roman estimation—took out its sting by following up his

[1] "*The victim of Obi:*"—It seems worthy of notice, that this magical fascination is generally called Obi, and the magicians Obeah men, throughout Guinea, Negroland, etc.; whilst the Hebrew or Syriac word for the rites of necromancy, was *Ob* or *Obh*, at least when ventriloquism was concerned.

own oversight, as if it had been intentional, putting his lips to the ground, kissing it, and ejaculating that in this way he appropriated the soil.

Omens of every class were certainly regarded, in ancient Rome, with a reverence that can hardly be surpassed. But yet, with respect to those omens derived from names, it is certain that our modern times have more memorable examples on record. Out of a large number which occur to me, I will cite two:—The present[1] King of the French bore in his boyish days a title which he would not have borne, but for an omen of bad augury attached to his proper title. Before the death of his father *Egalité* had raised him to the princely honours of Orleans, his own proper title had been *Duc de Valois*. Why then was he not openly so styled? The reason lay in a secret omen of evil connected with that title, and communicated only to a few friends of that great house. The story is thus told:—The father of that famous Regent Orleans who governed France during the minority of Louis XV., was the sole brother of Louis Quatorze. He married for his first wife our English princess Henrietta, the sister of Charles II. (and through her daughter, by the way, it is that the house of Savoy—*i.e.*, of Sardinia—has pretensions to the English throne). This unhappy lady, it is too well established, was poisoned. Voltaire, amongst many others, has affected to doubt the fact; for which in his time there might be some excuse. But since then better evidences have placed the matter beyond all question. We now know both the fact, and the how, and the why. The duke, who *possibly* was no party to the murder of his young wife, though otherwise on bad terms with her, married for his second wife a coarse German princess, homely in every sense, and a singular contrast to the elegant creature whom he had lost. She was a daughter of the Bavarian Elector; ill-tempered by her own confession, self-willed, and a plain speaker to excess; but otherwise a woman of honest German integrity. Unhappy she was through a long life; unhappy through the monotony as well as the malicious intrigues of the French court; and so much so, that she did her best (though without effect) to prevent her Bavarian niece from becoming dauphiness. She acquits her husband, however, in the memoirs which she left behind, of any intentional share in her unhappiness; and describes him constantly as a well-disposed prince. But whether it were, that, often walking in the dusk of evening through the numerous

[1] "*Present:*"—This was written, I believe, about 1839.

apartments of that vast mansion which her husband had so much enlarged, naturally she turned her thoughts to that injured English lady who had presided there before herself: or whether it arose from the inevitable gloom which broods continually over mighty palaces, so much is known for certain, that one evening, in the twilight, she met at a remote quarter of the reception-rooms something or other that she took for a spiritual apparition. What she fancied to have passed in this interview with the apparition was never known except to her nearest friends; and if she made any explanations in her memoirs, the editor has thought fit to suppress them. All that transpired was—that some ominous revelation was then made with respect to the title of *Valois*, which was the proper second title of the Orleans family; and that, in consequence of this communication, her son, the Regent, had assumed in his boyhood that of Duc de Chartres. His elder brother was dead, so that the superior title was open to him; but, in consequence of those mysterious omens, whatever they might be, which occasioned much whispering at the time, the great title of Valois was laid aside for ever as of bad augury; nor has it ever been resumed through a century and a half that have followed that mysterious warning; nor will it be resumed, unless the numerous children of the present Orleans branch should find themselves distressed for ancient titles; which is not likely, since they enjoy the honours of the elder house, as well as of their own, and are now (1839) the *children of France* in the amplest and most privileged sense.

Here we have a great European case of state omens in the eldest of Christian houses. The next which I shall cite is equally a state case, and carries its public verification along with itself. In the spring of 1799, when Napoleon was lying before Acre, he became anxious for news from Upper Egypt, whither he had despatched Dessaix in pursuit of a distinguished Mameluke leader. This was in the middle of May. Not many days after, a courier arrived with favourable despatches—favourable in the main, but reporting one tragical occurrence on a small scale, that to Napoleon, for a superstitious reason, outweighed the public prosperity. A *djerme*, or Nile boat of the largest class, having on board a large party of troops and of wounded men, together with most of a regimental band, had run ashore at the village of Benouth. No case could be more hopeless. The neighbouring Arabs belonged to the Yambo tribe—of all Arabs the most ferocious. These Arabs and the Fellahs (whom, by

the way, many of our countrymen are so ready to represent as friendly to the French and hostile to ourselves) had taken the opportunity of attacking the vessel. The engagement was obstinate; but at length the inevitable catastrophe could be delayed no longer. The commander, an Italian named Morandi, was a brave man; any fate appeared better than that which awaited him from an enemy so malignant. He set fire to the powder magazine; the vessel blew up; Morandi perished; and all of less nerve, who had previously reached the shore in safety, were put to death to the very last man, with cruelties the most detestable, by their inhuman enemies. For all this Napoleon cared little; but one solitary fact there was in the report which struck him with secret alarm. This ill-fated *djerme*—what was it called? It was called *L'Italie;* and in the name of the vessel Napoleon read an augury of the fate which had befallen the Italian territory. Considered as a dependency of France, he felt certain that Italy was lost; and Napoleon was inconsolable. But what possible connection, it was asked, can exist between this vessel on the Nile and a remote peninsula of Southern Europe? "No matter," replied Napoleon; "my presentiments never deceive me. You will see that all is ruined. I am satisfied that my Italy, my conquest, is lost to France!" So, indeed, it was. All European news had long been intercepted by the English cruisers; but immediately after the French victory over the Vizier in July, 1799, an English admiral first informed the French army of Egypt, that Massena and others had lost all that Bonaparte had won in 1796. It is, however, a strange illustration of human blindness, that this very subject of Napoleon's lamentation—this very Italian campaign of 1799—it was, with its blunders and its long equipage of disasters, that paved the way for his own elevation to the Consulship, just seven calendar months from the receipt of that Egyptian despatch; since most certainly in the struggle of Brumaire 1799, doubtful and critical through every stage, it was the pointed contrast between his own Italian campaigns and those of his successors, which gave effect to Napoleon's pretensions, and which procured them a ratification amongst the people. The loss of Italy—that loss which so much disturbed him in Syria—was essential to the full effect of Napoleon's previous conquest. By anything short of that temporary eclipse for France, no adequate contrast between himself and his rivals would have been established for Napoleon; no opening would have been made for Marengo in the summer of 1800. That and the imbecile

characters of Napoleon's chief military opponents were the true keys to the great revolution of Brumaire. The stone which he rejected became the keystone of the arch. So that, after all, he *valued* the omen falsely; though the very next news from Europe, courteously communicated by his English enemies, showed that he had *read* its immediate *interpretation* rightly.

These omens, derived from names, are therefore common to the ancient and the modern world. But perhaps, in strict logic, they ought to have been classed as one subdivision or variety under a much larger head; viz., words generally, no matter whether proper names or appellatives, viewed as operative powers and agencies, bearing, that is to say, a charmed power against some party concerned from the moment that they leave the lips.

Homer describes prayers as having a separate life, rising buoyantly upon wings, and making their way upwards to the throne of Jove. Such, but in a sense more gloomy and terrific, is the force ascribed under a widespread superstition, ancient and modern, to words uttered on critical occasions; or to words uttered at any time, which point to critical occasions. Hence the doctrine of *ευφημισμος*, the necessity of abstaining from strong words or direct words in expressing fatal contingencies. *Favete linguis*—favour me with your tongues, give me the benefit of your propitious voices—was a standing request in Pagan days. It was shocking, at all times of Paganism, to say of a third person—"If he should die;" or to suppose the case that he might be murdered. The very word *death* was consecrated and forbidden; *i.e.*, was tabooed. *Si quiddam humanum passus fuerit* was the extreme form to which men advanced in such cases. And this scrupulous feeling, originally founded on the supposed efficacy of words, prevails to this day. It is a feeling undoubtedly supported by good taste, which strongly impresses upon us all the discordant tone of any impassioned subjects (death, religion, etc.) with the common key of ordinary conversation. But good taste is not in itself sufficient to account for a scrupulousness so general and so austere. In the lowest classes there is a shuddering recoil still felt from uttering coarsely and roundly the anticipation of a person's death. Suppose a child, heir to some great estate, the subject of conversation—the hypothesis of his death is put cautiously, under such forms as, "If anything but good should happen;" "if any change should occur;" "if any of us should chance to miscarry," and so forth. Always a modified expression is sought—always an

indirect one. And this timidity arises under the old superstition still lingering amongst men, like that ancient awe, noticed by Wordsworth, for the sea and its tremendous secrets—feelings that have not, no, nor ever will, become entirely obsolete. No excess of nautical skill will ever perfectly disenchant the great abyss from its terrors—no progressive knowledge will ever medicine that dread misgiving of a mysterious and pathless power given to words of a certain import, or uttered in certain situations; by a parent, for instance, to persecuting or insulting children; by the victim of horrible oppression, when labouring in final agonies;[1] and by others, whether cursing or blessing, who stand central to great passions, to great interests, or to great perplexities.

And here, by way of parenthesis, I might stop to attempt an explanation of the force attached to that scriptural expression, "*Thou hast said it.*" It is an answer adopted by our Saviour; and the meaning seems radically to be this:—the popular belief authorised the notion, that simply to have uttered any great thesis, though unconsciously, simply to have united verbally any two great ideas, though for a purpose the most different or even opposite, had the mysterious power of realising them in act. An exclamation, though in the purest spirit of sport, addressed to a boy, "*You shall be our imperator,*" was many times supposed to be the forerunner and fatal mandate for the boy's elevation. Words that were blind, and words that were torn from frantic depths of anguish, oftentimes, it was thought, executed themselves. To connect, though but for denial or for mockery, the ideas of Jesus and the Messiah—as, *e.g.*, *Art thou the Christ, or the Anointed?*—furnished an augury of their eventual coincidence. It was an *argumentum ad hominem*, and drawn from a popular faith.

But a modern reader will object the want of an accompanying design or serious intention on the part of him who utters the words—he never meant his words to be taken seriously—nay, his purpose was the very opposite. True: and precisely *that* is the reason why his words are likely to operate effectually, and why they should be feared. Here lies the critical point which most of all distinguishes this faith. Words took effect, not merely in default of a serious use, but exactly in consequence of that default. It was the chance word, the stray word, the

[1] As for example in that mysterious poem of Horace, where a dying boy points the fulminations of his dying words against the witch that presides over his tortures.

word uttered in jest, or in trifling, or in scorn, or unconsciously, which took effect; whilst ten thousand words, uttered with purpose and deliberation, were sure to prove inert. One case will illustrate this:—Alexander the Great, in the outset of his Persian expedition, consulted the oracle at Delphi. For the sake of his army, had he been even without personal faith, he desired to have his enterprise grandly authorised. No persuasions, however, would move the priestess to enter upon her painful and agitating duties, for the sake of obtaining the regular answer of the god. Wearied with this, Alexander seized the great lady by the arm, and using as much violence as was becoming to the two characters—of a great prince acting, and a great priestess suffering—he pushed her gently backwards to the tripod on which, in her professional character, it was requisite that she should be seated. Instantly and spontaneously, in the hurry and excitement of the moment, the priestess exclaimed, Ω παι, ανικητος ει—*O son, thou art irresistible;* never adverting for an instant to his martial purposes in the future, but simply to his present personal importunities at the moment. The person whom she thought of as incapable of resistance was not Darius, the great King of Susa and Persepolis, of Ecbatana, and Babylon, and Sardis, but her own womanly self; and all she meant *consciously* was—O son, I can refuse nothing to one so earnest. But mark what followed: Alexander desisted at once—he asked for no further oracle—he refused it, and exclaimed, joyously:—"Now then, noble priestess, farewell; I have the oracle—I have your answer, and better than any which you could deliver from the tripod. I am invincible—I am irresistible—so you have declared, you cannot revoke it. True, you thought not of Persia—you thought only of my importunity. But that very fact is what ratifies your answer. In its blindness I recognise its truth. An oracle from a god might be distorted by political ministers of the god, as in time past too often has been suspected. The oracle was said of old—to *Medise;* and in my own father's time to *Philippise.* But an oracle delivered unconsciously, indirectly, blindly, that is the oracle which cannot deceive." Such was the all-famous oracle which Alexander extorted—such was the oracle on which he and his army relying went forth "conquering and to conquer."

Exactly on this principle do the Turks act, in putting so high a value on the words of idiots. Enlightened Christians at one time wondered, but have long ceased to wonder, at their allowing any weight to people bereft of understanding. *That* is the

very reason for allowing them weight: that very defect it is which makes them capable of being organs for conveying words from higher intelligences. A fine human intelligence cannot be a passive instrument—it cannot be a mere tube for conveying the words of inspiration: such an intelligence will intermingle ideas of its own, or will otherwise modify what is given, and pollute what is sacred.

It is also on this principle that the whole practice and doctrine of sortilegy rest. Let us confine ourselves to that mode of sortilegy which is conducted by throwing open privileged books at random, and thus leaving to chance, or else (which was a variety in the practice often resorted to by Haydon the painter) throwing such books open in the dark, and leaving to the morning light the revelation of the silent oracle which lurked in the passage first catching the eye. The books used have varied with the caprice or the error of ages. Once the Hebrew Scriptures had the preference. Probably they were laid aside, not because the reverence for their authority decayed, but because it increased, so as to awaken in some minds a scrupulous sense of profanation in such a use of the sacred text. In later times Virgil has been the favourite. Considering the very limited range of ideas to which Virgil was tied by his theme—a colonising expedition in a barbarous age—no worse book could have been selected:[1] so little indeed does the *Æneid* exhibit of human life in its multiformity, that much tampering with the plain sense of the text is required to bring real cases of human interest and real situations within the scope of any Virgilian response, though aided by the utmost latitude of accommodation. A king, a soldier, a sailor, etc., might look for correspondences to their own circumstances. Accordingly, everybody remembers the dreadful answer which Charles I. received at Oxford from this mode of sortilegy at the opening of the Parliamentary War.

[1] "*No worse book could have been selected:*"—The probable reason for making so unhappy a choice seems to have been that Virgil, in the middle ages, had the character of a necromancer, a diviner, etc. This we all know from Dante. Now, the original reason for this strange translation of character and functions I hold to have arisen from the circumstance of his maternal grandfather having borne the name of *Magus*. People in those ages held that a powerful enchanter must have a magician, not amongst his *agnati*, but amongst his *cognati*; the power must run in the blood, which on the maternal side could be undeniably ascertained. Under this preconception, they took Magus not for a proper name, but for a professional designation. Amongst many illustrations of the magical character sustained by Virgil in the middle ages, we may mention that a writer, about the year 1200, or the era of our own Robin Hood, published by Montfaucon, says of Virgil, that "*Captus a Romanis invisibiliter exiit ivitque Neapolim.*"

But, beyond these broad obvious categories, and a very few subdivisions lying within them, it is vain to look for any reasonable compass of discrimination in the oracles of Virgil. Indeed, it was this very limitation in the Virgilian range of ideas, when the case itself imposed a vast Shakesperian breadth of speculation—a field of vision like that on which the fiend may be supposed to have planted Christ when showing to him all the kingdoms of the earth—that eventually threw back the earnest inquiries into futurity upon the *Sortes Biblicæ*. No case, indeed, can try so severely, or put upon record so conspicuously, this indestructible propensity for looking into the future by the aid of dice, real or figurative, as the fact of men eminent for piety having yielded to the temptation. I pause, to give one instance—the instance of a person who, in *practical* theology, although a narrow dissenter, has been, perhaps, more popular than any other in any church. Dr. Doddridge, in his earlier days, was in a dilemma both of conscience and of taste as to the election he should make between two situations, one in possession, both at his command. He was settled at Harborough, in Leicestershire, and was "pleasing himself with the view of a continuance" in that situation. True, he had received an invitation to Northampton; but the reasons against complying seemed so strong, that nothing was wanting beyond the civility of going over to Northampton, and making an apologetic farewell. Accordingly, on the last Sunday in November of the year 1729, the doctor went and preached a sermon in conformity with those purposes. "But," says he, "on the morning of that day an incident happened which affected me greatly." On the night previous, it seems he had been urged very importunately by his Northampton friends to undertake the vacant office. Much personal kindness had concurred with this public importunity: the good doctor was affected; he had prayed fervently, alleging in his prayer, as the reason which chiefly weighed with him to reject the offer, that it was far beyond his forces, and mainly because he was too young,[1] and had no assistant. He goes on thus: "As soon as ever this address" (meaning the prayer) "was ended, I passed through a room in the house in which I lodged, where a child was reading to his mother, and the only words I heard distinctly were these, *And as thy days*,

[1] "*Because he was too young:*"—Dr. Doddridge was born in the summer of 1702; consequently he was at this era of his life about twenty-seven years old, and not so obviously entitled to the excuse of youth. But he pleaded his youth, not with a view to the exertions required, but to the *auctoritas* and responsibilities of the situation.

so shall thy strength be." This singular coincidence between his own difficulty and a scriptural line, caught at random in passing hastily through a room (but observe, a line insulated from the context, and placed in high relief to his ear), shook his resolution. Accident co-operated; a promise to be fulfilled at Northampton, in a certain contingency, fell due at the instant; the doctor was detained; the detention gave time for further representations; new motives arose; old difficulties were removed; and finally the doctor saw, in all this succession of steps (the first of which, however, lay in the *Sortes Biblicæ*), clear indications of a providential guidance. With that conviction he took up his abode at Northampton, and remained there for the next thirty-one years, until he left it for his grave at Lisbon; in fact, he passed at Northampton the whole of his public life. It must, therefore, be allowed to stand upon the records of sortilegy, that in the main direction of his life—not, indeed, as to its spirit, but as to its form and local connections—a Protestant divine of much merit, and chiefly in what regards practice, and of the class most opposed to superstition, who himself vehemently combated superstition, took his determining impulse from a variety of the *Sortes Virgilianæ*.

This variety was known in earlier times to the Jews—as early, indeed, as the era of the Grecian Pericles, if we are to believe the *Talmud*. It is known familiarly to this day amongst Polish Jews, and is called *Bath-col*, or the *daughter-voice ;* the meaning of which appellation is this:—The *Urim and Thummim*, or oracle in the breastplate of the high priest, spoke directly from God. It was, therefore, the original, or mother-voice. But about the time of Pericles—that is, about one hundred years before the time of Alexander the Great—the light of prophecy was quenched in Malachi or Haggai; and the oracular jewels in the breastplate became simultaneously dim. Henceforwards the mother-voice was heard no longer: but to this succeeded an imperfect or daughter-voice (*Bath-col*), which lay in the first words happening to arrest the attention at a moment of perplexity. An illustration, which has been often quoted from the *Talmud*, is to the following effect:—Rabbi Jochannan, and Rabbi Simeon Ben Lachish, were anxious about a friend Rabbi *Samuel*, six hundred miles distant on the Euphrates. Whilst talking earnestly together on this subject in Palestine, they passed a school; they paused to listen: it was a child reading the first book of Samuel; and the words which they caught were these—*And Samuel died.* These words they received humbly and

sorrowfully as a *Bath-col:* and the next horseman from the East brought word accordingly that Rabbi Samuel had been gathered to his fathers at some station on the Euphrates.

Here is the very same case, the same *Bath-col* substantially, which I have cited from Orton's *Life of Doddridge*. And Du Cange himself notices, in his Glossary, the relation which this bore to the Pagan *Sortes*. "It was," says he, "a fantastical way of divination, invented by the Jews, not unlike the *Sortes Virgilianæ* of the heathens. For, as with them the first words they happened to dip into in the works of that poet became a kind of oracle whereby they predicted future events, so, with the Jews, when they appealed to *Bath-col*, the first words they heard from any one's mouth were looked upon as a voice from Heaven directing them in the matter they inquired about."

Such is *verbatim* the report of Du Cange on this matter; and if from any of its expressions the reader should be disposed to infer that this ancient form of the practical miraculous is at all gone out of use, even the example of Dr. Doddridge may satisfy him to the contrary. Such an example was sure to authorise a large imitation. But, even apart from that, the superstition is common. The records of conversion amongst felons and other ignorant persons might be cited by hundreds upon hundreds, to prove that no practice is more common than that of trying the spiritual fate, and abiding by the import of any passage in the Scriptures which may first present itself to the eye. Cowper the poet has recorded a case of this sort in his own experience. It is one to which all the unhappy are prone. But a mode of questioning the oracles of darkness, far more childish, and, under some shape or other, equally common amongst those who are prompted by mere vacancy of mind, without that determination to sacred fountains which is impressed by misery, may be found in the following extravagant silliness of Rousseau, which I give in his own words—a case for which he admits that he himself would have *shut up* any other man (meaning in a lunatic hospital) whom he had seen practising the same absurdities:—

"Au milieu de mes études et d'une vie innocente autant qu'on la puisse mener, et malgré tout ce qu'on m'avoit pu dire, la peur de l'Enfer m'agitoit encore. Souvent je me demandois —En quel état suis-je? Si je mourrois à l'instant meme, *serois-je damné?* Selon mes Jansenistes [he had been reading the books of the Port Royal], la chose est indubitable: mais, selon ma conscience, il me paroissoit que non. Toujours craintif

et flottant dans cette cruelle incertitude, j'avois recours (pour en sortir) aux expedients les plus risibles, et pour lesquels je ferois volontiers enfermer un homme si je lui en voyois faire autant. . . . Un jour, révant à ce triste sujet, je m'exerçois machinalement à lancer les pierres contre les troncs des arbres; et cela avec mon addresse ordinaire, c'est-à dire sans presque jamais en toucher aucun. Tout au milieu de ce bel exercise, je m'avisai de faire une espéce de pronostic pour calmer mon inquiétude. Je me dis—je m'en vais jeter cette pierre contre l'arbre qui est vis-a-vis de moi: si je le touche, signe de salut: si je le manque, signe de damnation. Tout en disant ainsi, je jette ma pierre d'une main tremblante et avec un horrible battement de cœur, mais si heureusement qu'elle va frapper au beau-milieu de l'arbre: ce qui véritablement n'étoit pas difficile: car j'avois eu soin de le choisir fort gros et fort prés. *Depuis lors je n'ai plus doubté de mon salut.* Je ne sais, en me rappelant ce trait si je dois rire ou gémir sur moimeme."—*Les Confessions, Partie I. Livre VI.*

Now, really, if Rousseau thought fit to try such tremendous appeals by taking "a shy" at any random object, he should have governed his sortilege (for such it may be called) with something more like equity. Fair play is a jewel: and in such a case a man is supposed to play against an adverse party hid in darkness. To shy at a cow within six feet distance gives no chance at all to his dark antagonist. A pigeon rising from a trap at a suitable distance might be thought a *sincere* staking of the interest at issue: but as to the massy stem of a tree "fort gras et fort pres"—the sarcasm of a Roman emperor applies, that to miss under such conditions implied an original genius for missing, so that to hit—as it involved no risk—was no honest trial of the case. After all, the sentimentalist had youth to plead in apology for this extravagance. He was hypochondriacal; he was in solitude; and he was possessed by gloomy imaginations from the works of a society in the highest public credit. But most readers will be aware of similar appeals to the mysteries of Providence, made in public by well-known sectarians, speaking from the solemn station of a pulpit. I forbear to quote cases of this nature, though really existing in print, because I feel that the profaneness of such anecdotes is more revolting and more painful to pious minds than the absurdity is amusing. Meantime it must not be forgotten, that the principle concerned, though it may happen to disgust men when associated with ludicrous circumstances, is, after all, the very same which has latently

governed very many modes of ordeal, or judicial inquiry; and which has been adopted as a moral rule or canon, equally by the blindest of the Pagans, the most fanatical of the Jews, and the most enlightened of the Christians. It proceeds upon the assumption that man by his actions puts a question to Heaven; and that Heaven answers by the event. Lucan, in a well-known passage, takes it for granted that the cause of Cæsar had the approbation of the gods. But why? Simply from the event. Notoriously it was the triumphant cause. It was victorious. It was the "*victrix* causa;" and, *as* such, simply because it was "victrix," it had a right in his eyes to postulate the divine favour as mere matter of necessary inference: whilst, on the other hand, the *victa causa*, though it seemed to Lucan sanctioned and consecrated by human virtue in the person of Cato, stood, as regarded heavenly verdicts, unappealably condemned.[1] This mode of reasoning may strike the reader as merely Pagan. Not at all. In England, at the close of the Parliamentary War, it was generally argued, that Providence had decided the question against the Royalists by the mere fact of the issue. Milton himself, with all his high-toned morality, uses this argument as irrefragable; which is odd, were it only on this account—that the issue ought necessarily to have been held for a very considerable time as merely provisional, and liable to be set aside by possible counter-issues through one generation at the least.[2] But the capital argument against such doctrine is to be found in the New Testament. Strange that Milton should overlook, and strange that moralists in general have overlooked, the sudden arrest given to this dangerous (but most prevalent) mode of reasoning by the Founder of our faith. He first, he last, taught to his astonished disciples the new truth—at that time the

[1] *Victrix causa Deis placuit; sed victa Catoni*—that cause which triumphed approved itself to the gods; but, in retaliation, the vanquished cause approved itself to Cato. Perhaps, in all human experience, in books or in colloquial intercourse, there never was so grand, so awful a compliment paid to an individual as this of Lucan's to Cato; nor, according to my own judgment, one so entirely misplaced. One solitary individual, in his single person, is made to counterpoise by weight of *auctoritas* and power of sanction the entire Pantheon. The Julian cause might have seemed the better, for it won the favour of Heaven. But no. The Pompeian must have been the better, for it won the favour of Cato.

[2] And in fact not merely *liable* to be set aside, but *actually* set aside in 1660 by the Restoration. This reversal was again partially reversed, or at least to a great extent virtually reversed, by the Revolution of 1688-9: upon which great event the true judgment, too little perceived by English historians, is, that, for the most part, it was a re-affirmation of the principles contended for by the Long Parliament in the Parliamentary War. But this final verdict Milton did not live to see, or even dimly to anticipate.

astounding truth—that no relation exists between the immediate practical events of things on the one side, and divine verdicts on the other. There was no presumption, for instance, against a man's favour with God, or that of his parents, because he happened to be afflicted to extremity with bodily disease. There was no shadow of an argument for believing a party of men criminal objects of heavenly wrath, because upon them, by fatal preference, a tower had fallen, and because *their* bodies were exclusively mangled. How little can it be said that Christianity has yet developed the fulness of its power, when kings and senates so recently acted under a total oblivion of this great though novel Christian doctrine, and would do so still, were it not that religious arguments have been banished by the progress of taste and the caprices of fashion from the field of political discussion.

But, quitting this province of the ominous, where it is made the object of a direct personal inquest, whether by private or by national trials, or by the sortilegy of events, let us throw our eyes over the broader field of omens, as they offer themselves spontaneously to those who do not seek, or would even willingly evade them. There are few of these, perhaps none, which are not universal in their authority, though every land in turn fancies them (like its proverbs) of local authority and origin. The death-watch, for instance, extends from England to Cashmere, and across India to the remotest nook of Bengal. A hare crossing a man's path on starting in the morning, has been held in all countries alike to prognosticate evil in the course of that day. Thus, in the *Confessions of a Thug* (which is partially built on a real judicial document, and everywhere conforms to the usages of Hindostan), the hero of the horrid narrative[1]

[1] "*The hero of the horrid narrative:*"—Horrid it certainly is; and one incident in every case gives a demoniacal air of coolness to the hellish atrocities—viz. the regular forwarding of the *bheels*, for the purpose of digging the graves. But else the tale tends too much to monotony; and for a reason which ought to have checked the author in carrying on the work to three volumes; namely, that, although there is much dramatic variety in the circumstances of the several cases, there is none in the catastrophes. The brave man and the coward, the erect spirit fighting to the last, and the poor creature that despairs from the first—all are confounded in one undistinguishing end by sudden strangulation. This was the original defect of the plan. The sudden surprise, and the scientific noosing as with a Chilian *lasso*, constituted, in fact, the main feature of Thuggee. But still, the gradual theatrical arrangement of each Thug severally by the side of a victim, must often have roused violent suspicion, and that in time to intercept the suddenness of the murder. Now, for the sake of the dramatic effect, this interception ought more often to have been introduced, else the murders are but so many blind surprises as if in sleep. All this might have been managed otherwise.

charges some disaster of his own upon having neglected such an omen in the morning. The same belief operated in Pagan Italy. The same omen announced to Lord Lindsay's Arab attendants in the desert the approach of some disaster, which partially happened in the morning. And a Highlander of the 42nd regiment in his printed memoirs, notices the same harbinger of evil as having crossed his own path on a day of personal disaster in Spain.

Birds are even more familiarly associated with such ominous warnings. This chapter in the great volume of superstition was indeed cultivated with unusual solicitude amongst the Pagans —*ornithomancy* (or the derivation of omens from the motions of birds) grew into an elaborate science. But if every rule and distinction upon the number and the position of birds, whether to the right or the left, had been collected from our own village matrons, it would appear that no more of this Pagan science had gone to wreck amongst ourselves, than must naturally follow the difference between a believing and a disbelieving government. Magpies are still of awful authority in village life, according to their number, etc.; for a striking illustration of which I may refer the reader to Sir Walter Scott's *Demonology*, reported not at second-hand, but from Sir Walter's personal communication with some sea-faring fellow-traveller in a stage-coach.[1]

Among the ancient stories of the same class is one which I will repeat—having reference to that Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, before whom St. Paul made his famous apology at Cæsarea. This Agrippa, overwhelmed by debts, had fled from Palestine to Rome in the latter years of Tiberius. His

[1] Since this was first written, Haydon the painter, in his *Autobiography* [I. p. 76], refers to this ancient superstition in terms which I have reason to think inaccurate: "She" (his mother) "appeared depressed and melancholy. During the journey, four magpies rose, chattered, and flew away. The singular superstitions about the bird were remembered by us all. I repeated to myself the old saw—'*One for sorrow, two for mirth, three for a wedding, and four for death.*' I tried to deceive my dear mother, by declaring that *two were for death, and four for mirth*: but she persisted that four announced death in Devonshire; and absurd as we felt it to be, we could not shake off the superstition." About three o'clock in the succeeding night Mrs. Haydon died. Meantime, whatever may be the Devonshire version of the old saying, I am assured by a lady that the form current elsewhere is this:

"One for sorrow;
Two for mirth;
Three for a wedding;
And four for a birth."

And it is clear that the rhyme in the latter reading offers some guarantee for its superior accuracy.

mother's interest with the widow of Germanicus procured him a special recommendation to her son Caligula. Viewing this child and heir of the lamented Germanicus as the rising sun, Agrippa had been too careless in his language. True, the uncle of Germanicus was the reigning prince; but he was old, and breaking up. True, the son of Germanicus was not yet on the throne; but he soon would be; so that Agrippa was rash enough to call the emperor a *superannuated old fellow*, and even to wish for his death. Sejanus was now dead and gone; but there was no want of spies: and a certain Macro reported his words to Tiberius. Agrippa was in consequence arrested; the emperor himself condescending to point out the noble Jew to the officer on duty. The case was a gloomy one, if Tiberius should happen to survive much longer: and the story of the omen proceeds thus:—"Now Agrippa stood in his bonds before the imperial palace, and in his affliction leaned against a certain tree, upon the boughs of which it happened that a bird had alighted which the Romans call *bubo*, or the owl. All this was steadfastly observed by a German prisoner, who asked a soldier what might be the name and offence of that man habited in purple. Being told that the man's name was Herod Agrippa, and that he was a Jew of high rank, who had given a personal offence to the emperor, the German asked permission to go near and address him; which being granted, he spoke thus:—'This disaster, I doubt not, young man, is trying to your heart; and perhaps you will not believe me when I announce to you beforehand the providential deliverance which is impending. However, this much I will say—and for my sincerity let me appeal to my native gods as well as to the gods of this Rome, who have brought us both into trouble—that no selfish object prompts me to this revelation; for a revelation it is. Listen. It is fated that you shall not long remain in chains. Your deliverance will be speedy; and I can venture to guarantee that you shall be raised to the very highest rank and power; that you shall be the object of as much envy as now you are of pity; that you shall retain your prosperity till death; and that you shall transmit that prosperity to your children. But ——' And there the German paused. Agrippa was agitated; the bystanders were attentive; and after a time the German, pointing solemnly to the bird, proceeded thus:—'But this remember heedfully—that, when next you see the bird which now perches above your head, you will only have five days more to live! This event will be surely accomplished by that same mysterious god who has thought fit to send the bird as a warning sign; and

you, when you come to your glory, do not forget me that foreshadowed it in your humiliation.'" The story adds, that Agrippa affected to laugh when the German soldier concluded; after which it goes on to say, that in a few weeks, being delivered by the death of Tiberius; being released from prison by the very prince on whose account he had incurred the risk; being raised to a tetrarchy, and afterwards to the kingdom of all Judea; coming into all the prosperity which had been promised to him by the German, and not losing any part of his interest at Rome through the assassination of his patron Caligula—he began to look back reverentially to the words of the German, and forwards with anxiety to the second coming of the bird. Seven years of sunshine had now slipped away as silently as a dream. A great festival, with public shows and votive offerings, was on the point of being celebrated in honour of Claudius Cæsar, at Strato's Tower, otherwise called Cæsarea, which (and not Jerusalem) was the Roman metropolis of Palestine. Duty and policy alike required that the king of the land should go down and unite in this mode of religious homage to the emperor. He did so; and on the second morning of the festival, by way of doing more conspicuous honour to the great solemnity, he assumed a very sumptuous attire of silver armour, burnished so highly as to throw back a dazzling glare from the sun's morning beams upon the upturned eyes of the vast multitude around him. Immediately from the sycophantish part of the crowd, of whom a vast majority were Pagans, ascended a cry of glorification as to some manifestation of Deity. Agrippa, gratified by this success of his new apparel, and by this flattery, had not the firmness (though a Jew, and conscious of the wickedness, greater in himself than in the heathen crowd) to reject the blasphemous homage. Voices of adoration continued to ascend; when suddenly looking upward to the vast awnings prepared for screening the audience from the noonday heats, the king perceived the same ominous bird which he had seen at Rome in the day of his affliction, seated quietly, and looking down upon himself. In that same moment an icy pang shot through his intestines. He was removed into the palace; and at the end of five days, completely worn out by pain, Agrippa expired, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the seventh of his sovereign power.

Whether the bird, here described as an owl, were really such, may be doubted, considering the narrow nomenclature of the Romans for all zoological purposes, and the total indifference of

the Roman mind to all distinctions in natural history which are not upon the very largest scale. I myself am greatly disposed to suspect that the bird was a magpie. Meantime, speaking of ornithoscopy in relation to Jews, I remember another story in that subdivision of the subject which it may be worth while repeating; not merely on its own account, as wearing a fine oriental air, but also for the correction which it suggests to a very common error.

In some period of Syrian warfare, a large military detachment was entering at some point of Syria from the desert of the Euphrates. At the head of the whole array rode two men of some distinction: one was an augur of high reputation, the other was a Jew called Mosollam, a man of admirable beauty, a matchless horseman, unerring as an archer, and accomplished in all martial arts. As they were now first coming within enclosed grounds, after a long march in the wilderness, the augur was most anxious to inaugurate the expedition by some impressive omen. Watching anxiously, therefore, he soon saw a bird of splendid plumage perching on a low wall. "Halt!" he said to the advanced guard: and all drew up in a line. At that moment of silence and expectation, Mosollam, slightly turning himself in his saddle, drew his bow-string to his ear; his Jewish hatred of Pagan auguries burned within him; his inevitable shaft went right to its mark, and the beautiful bird fell dead. The augur turned round in fury. But the Jew laughed at him. "This bird, you say, should have furnished us with omens of our future fortunes. And yet, had he known anything of his own, he would never have perched where he did, or have come within the range of Mosollam's archery. How should that bird know *our* destiny, who did not know that it was his own to be shot by Mosollam the Jew?"

Now, this is a common but a most erroneous way of arguing. In a case of this kind, the bird was not supposed to have any *conscious* acquaintance with futurity, either for his own benefit or that of others. But even where such a consciousness may be supposed, as in the case of oneiromancy, or prophecy by means of dreams, it must be supposed limited, and the more limited in a personal sense, as it is illimitable in a sublimer or spiritual sense. Who imagines that, because an Ezekiel foresaw the grand revolutions of the earth, therefore he must or could have foreseen the little details of his own ordinary life? And even descending from that perfect inspiration to the more doubtful power of augury amongst the Pagans (concerning

which the most eminent of theologians have held very opposite theories), one thing is certain, that, so long as we entertain such pretensions, or discuss them at all, we must take them with the principles of those who professed such arts, not with principles of our own arbitrary invention.

One example will make this clear:—There are in England [1] a class of men who practise the Pagan rhabdomancy in a limited sense. They carry a rod or rhabdos (ῥαβδος) of willow: this they hold horizontally; and by the bending of the rod towards the ground they discover the favourable places for sinking wells; a matter of considerable importance in a province so ill-watered as the northern district of Somersetshire. These people are locally called *jowsers;* and it is probable that, from the suspicion with which their art has been usually regarded amongst people of education as the mere legerdemain trick of the professional *Dousterswivel* (see the *Antiquary*) is derived the slang word to *chouse* for *swindle*. Meantime, the experimental evidences of a real practical skill in these men, and the enlarged compass of speculation in these days, have led many enlightened people to a stoic επoχη, or suspension of judgment, on the reality of this somewhat mysterious art.

Now, in the East, there are men who make the same pretensions in a more showy branch of the art. It is not water, but treasures, which they profess to find by some hidden kind of rhabdomancy. The very existence of treasures with us is reasonably considered a thing of improbable occurrence. But in the unsettled East, and with the low valuation of human life wherever Mahometanism prevails, insecurity and other causes must have caused millions of such deposits in every century to have perished as to any knowledge of survivors. The sword has been moving backwards and forwards, for instance, like a weaver's shuttle, since the time of Mahmoud the Ghaznevide,[2] in Anno Domini 1000—*i.e.*, for eight hundred years—throughout the vast regions bounded by the Tigris, the Oxus, and the

[1] "*There are in England:*"—Especially in Somersetshire, and for twenty miles round Wrington, the birthplace of Locke. Nobody sinks for wells without their advice. I myself knew an amiable Scottish family, who, at an estate called Belmaduthie, in memory of a similar property in Rossshire, built a house in Somersetshire, and resolved to find water without help from the jowser. But, after sinking to a greater depth than ever had been known before, and spending a large sum of money, they were finally obliged to consult the jowser, who found water at once.

[2] Mahmoud of Ghizni, otherwise Ghuznee, which was so recently taken in one hour by our Indian army under Lord Keane. This Affghan leader was the first Mahometan invader of Hindostan—viz. about the year 1000 of our Christian era.

Indus. Regularly as it approached, gold and jewels must have sunk by whole harvests into the ground. A certain percentage has been no doubt recovered; but a larger percentage has disappeared for ever. Hence naturally the jealousy of barbarous Orientals that we Europeans, in groping amongst pyramids, sphinxes, and tombs, are looking for buried treasures. These wretches are not so wide astray in what they believe, as in what they disbelieve. The treasures do really exist which they fancy; but then also the other treasures in the glorious antiquities have that existence for our sense of beauty which to their brutality is inconceivable. In these circumstances, why should it surprise us that men will pursue the science of discovery as a regular trade? Many discoveries of treasure are doubtless made continually, which, for obvious reasons, are communicated to nobody. Some proportions there must be between the sowing of such grain as diamonds or emeralds, and the subsequent reaping, whether by accident or by art. For, with regard to the last, it is no more impossible, *primâ fronte*, that a substance may exist having an occult sympathy with subterraneous water or subterraneous gold, than that the magnet should have a sympathy (as yet occult) with the northern pole of our planet.

The first flash of careless thought applied to such a case will suggest, that men holding powers of this nature need not offer their services for hire to others. And this, in fact, is the objection universally urged by us Europeans as decisive against their pretensions. Their knavery, it is fancied, stands self-recorded; since assuredly they would not be willing to divide their subterranean treasures, if they knew of any. Among the fragments still surviving of the Roman poet Ennius, is an elegant series of verses, in which he expresses this opinion with a fierce tone of mockery for the vulgar disposition to countenance pretensions that seem self-exposed as so manifestly fraudulent. But the men are not in such self-contradiction as might seem. Lady Hester Stanhope, from the ampler knowledge which she had acquired of oriental opinions, set Dr. Madden right on this point. The oriental belief is, that a fatality attends the appropriator of a treasure in any case where he happens also to be the discoverer. Such a person, it is held, will die soon and suddenly; so that he is compelled to seek his remuneration from the wages or fees of his employers, not from the treasure itself.

Generally, I may remark, that the same practices of subterranean deposits, during our troubled periods in Europe, led to

the same superstitions. And it may be added, that the same error has arisen in both cases as to some of these superstitions. How often must it have struck people of liberal feelings, as a scandalous proof of the preposterous value set upon riches by poor men, that ghosts should popularly be supposed to rise and wander for the sake of revealing the situations of buried treasures. For my own part, I have been accustomed to view this popular belief as an argument for pity rather than for contempt towards poor men, as indicating the extreme pressure of that necessity which could so far have demoralised their natural sense of truth and moral proportions. But certainly, in whatever feelings originating, and howsoever excusable in poor men, such popular superstitions as to the motives of ghostly missions did seem to argue a deplorable misconception of the relation subsisting between the spiritual world and the perishable treasures of this perishable world. Yet, when we look into the eastern explanations of this case, we find it subject to a very different reading, and that it is meant to express, not any over-valuation of riches, but the direct contrary passion. A human spirit is punished—such is the notion—in the spiritual world for excessive attachment to gold, by degradation to the office of its guardian; and from this office the tortured spirit can release itself only by revealing the treasure and transferring the custody. It is a penal martyrdom, not an elective passion for gold, which is thus exemplified in the wanderings of a treasure-ghost.

But, in a field where of necessity I am so much limited, I willingly pass from the consideration of these treasure or *khasné* phantoms (which alone sufficiently insure a swarm of ghostly terrors for all oriental ruins of cities) to the same marvellous apparitions, as they haunt other solitudes even more awful than those of ruined cities. In this world there are two mighty forms of perfect solitude—the ocean and the desert: the wilderness of the barren sands, and the wilderness of the barren waters. Both are the parents of inevitable superstitions—of terrors, solemn, ineradicable, eternal. Sailors and the children of the desert are alike overrun with spiritual hauntings, from accidents of peril essentially connected with those modes of life, and from the eternal spectacle of the infinite. Voices seem to blend with the raving of the sea, which will for ever impress the feeling of beings more than human: and every chamber of the great wilderness which, with little interruption, stretches from the Euphrates to the western shores of Africa, has its own peculiar terrors both as to sights and sounds. In the wilderness of Zin,

between Palestine and the Red Sea, a section of the desert well known in these days to our own countrymen, bells are heard daily pealing for matins or for vespers, from some phantom convent that no search of Christian or of Bedouin Arab has ever been able to discover. These bells have sounded since the Crusades. Other sounds, trumpets, the *Alala* of armies, etc., are heard in other regions of the desert. Forms, also, are seen of more people than have any right to be walking in human paths: sometimes forms of avowed terror; sometimes, which is a case of far more danger, appearances that mimic the shapes of men, and even of friends or comrades. This is a case much dwelt on by the old travellers, and which throws a gloom over the spirits of all Bedouins, and of every cafila or caravan. We all know what a sensation of loneliness or "eeriness" (to use an expressive term of the ballad poetry) arises to any small party assembling in a single room of a vast desolate mansion: how the timid among them fancy continually that they hear some remote door opening, or trace the sound of suppressed footsteps from some distant staircase. Such is the feeling in the desert, even in the midst of the caravan. The mighty solitude is seen: the dread silence is anticipated which will succeed to this brief transit of men, camels, and horses. Awe prevails even in the midst of society: but, if the traveller should loiter behind from fatigue, or be so imprudent as to ramble aside—should he from any cause once lose sight of his party, it is held that his chance is small of recovering their traces. And why? Not chiefly from the want of footmarks, where the wind effaces all impressions in half-an-hour, or of eyemarks, where all is one blank ocean of sand, but much more from the sounds or the visual appearances which are supposed to beset and to seduce all insulated wanderers.

Everybody knows the superstitions of the ancients about the *Nympholeptoi*, those who had seen Pan and the nymphs. But far more awful are the existing superstitions, throughout Asia and Africa, as to the perils of those who are phantom-haunted in the wilderness. The old Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, states them well: he speaks, indeed, of the Eastern or Tartar deserts; the steppes which stretch from European Russia to the footsteps of the Chinese throne; but exactly the same creed prevails amongst the Arabs, from Bagdad to Suez and Cairo—from Rosetta to Tunis—Tunis to Timbuctoo or Mequinez. "If, during the daytime," says he, "any person should remain behind, until the caravan is no longer in sight, he hears himself

unexpectedly called to by name, and in a voice with which he is familiar. Not doubting that the voice proceeds from some of his comrades, the unhappy man is beguiled from the right direction; and soon finding himself utterly confounded as to the path, he roams about in distraction, until he perishes miserably. If, on the other hand, this perilous separation of himself from the caravan should happen at night, he is sure to hear the uproar of a great cavalcade a mile or two to the right or left of the true track. He is thus seduced on one side: and at break of day finds himself far removed from man. Nay, even at noonday, it is well known that grave and respectable men, to all appearance, will come up to a particular traveller, will bear the look of a friend, and will gradually lure him by earnest conversation to a distance from the caravan; after which the sounds of men and camels will be heard continually at all points but the true one; whilst an insensible turning by the tenth of an inch at each separate step from the true direction will very soon suffice to set the traveller's face to the opposite point of the compass from that which his safety requires, and which his fancy represents to him as his real direction. Marvellous, indeed, and almost passing belief, are the stories reported of these desert phantoms, which are said at times to fill the air with choral music from all kinds of instruments, from drums, and the clash of arms: so that oftentimes a whole caravan are obliged to close up their open ranks, and to proceed in a compact line of march."

Lord Lindsay, in his very interesting travels through Egypt, Edom, etc., agrees with Warton in supposing (and probably enough) that from this account of the desert traditions in Marco Polo was derived Milton's fine passage in *Comus*:—

> " Of calling shapes, and beckoning shadows dire,
> And aery tongues that syllable men's names
> On sands, and shores, and desert wildernesses."

But the most remarkable of these desert superstitions, as suggested by the mention of Lord Lindsay, is one which that young nobleman, in some place which I cannot immediately find, has noticed, and which he was destined by a personal calamity immediately to illustrate. Lord Lindsay quotes from Vincent le Blanc an anecdote of a man in his own caravan, the companion of an Arab merchant, who disappeared in a mysterious manner. Four Moors, with a retaining fee of 100 ducats, were sent in quest of him, but came back *re infectâ*. " And 'tis

uncertain," adds Le Blanc, "whether he was swallowed up in the sands, or met his death by any other misfortune; as it often happens, by the relation of a merchant then in our company, who told us that, two years before, traversing the same journey, a comrade of his, going a little aside from the company, saw three men, who called him by his name; and one of them, to his thinking, favoured very much his companion; and, as he was about to follow them, his real companion calling him to come back to his company, he found himself deceived by the others, and thus was saved. And all travellers in these parts hold, that in the desert are many such phantasms seen, that strive to seduce the traveller." Thus far it is the traveller's own fault, warned as he is continually by the extreme anxiety of the Arab leaders or guides, with respect to all who stray to any distance, if he is duped or enticed by these pseudo-men: though, in the case of Lapland dogs, who ought to have a surer instinct of detection for counterfeits, we know from Sir Capel de Broke and others, that they are continually wiled away by the wolves who roam about the nightly encampments of travellers. But there is a secondary disaster, according to the Arab superstition, awaiting those whose eyes are once opened to the discernment of these phantoms. To see them, or to hear them, even where the traveller is careful to refuse their lures, entails the certainty of death in no long time. This is another form of that universal faith which made it impossible for any man to survive a bodily commerce, by whatever sense, with a spiritual being. We find it in the Old Testament, where the expression, "I have seen God, and shall die," means simply a supernatural being; since no Hebrew believed it possible for a nature purely human to sustain for a moment the sight of the Infinite Being. We find the same faith amongst ourselves, in the case of *doppelgänger* becoming apparent to the sight of those whom they counterfeit, and in many other varieties. We modern Europeans, of course, laugh at these superstitions; though, as La Place remarks (*Essai sur les Probabilites*), any case, however apparently incredible, if it is a recurrent case, is as much entitled to a fair valuation as if it had been more probable beforehand.[1]

[1] "*Is as much entitled to a fair valuation, under the laws of induction, as if it had been more probable beforehand:*"—One of the cases which La Place notices as entitled to a grave consideration, but which would most assuredly be treated as a trivial phenomenon, unworthy of attention, by commonplace spectators, is, when a run of success, with no apparent cause, takes place on heads or tails (*pile ou croix*). Most people dismiss such a case as pure accident. But La Place insists on its being duly valued as a fact

This being premised, we, who connect the superstition with the personal result, are more impressed by the fatal catastrophe to Mr. Ramsay than Lord Lindsay, who either failed to notice the *nexus* between the events, or possibly declined to put the case too forward in his reader's eye, from the solemnity of the circumstances, and the private interest to himself and his own family of the subsequent event. The case was this:—Mr. William Wardlaw Ramsay, the companion (and I believe relative) of Lord Lindsay, a man whose honourable character and whose intellectual accomplishments speak for themselves, in the posthumous memorabilia of his travels published by Lord Lindsay, had seen an array of objects in the desert, which, by facts immediately succeeding, was demonstrated to have been a mere ocular *lusus*, or (according to Arab notions) phantoms. During the absence from home of an Arab sheikh, who had been hired as conductor of Lord Lindsay's party, a hostile tribe (bearing the name of Tellaheens) had assaulted and pillaged his tents. Report of this had reached the English travelling party; it was known that the Tellaheens were still in motion, and for some days a hostile rencounter was looked for. At length, in crossing the well-known valley of the *Wady Araba*, that most ancient channel of communication between the Red Sea and Judea, etc., Mr. Ramsay saw, to his own entire conviction, a party of horse moving amongst same sand-hills. Afterwards it became certain, from accurate information, that this must have been an ocular illusion. It was established that no horseman *could* have been in that neighbourhood at that time. Lord Lindsay records the case as an illustration of " that spiritualised tone the imagination naturally assumes, in scenes presenting so little sympathy with the ordinary feelings of humanity; " and he reports the case in these pointed terms:—" Mr. Ramsay, a man of remarkably strong sight, and by no means disposed to superstitious credulity, distinctly saw a party of horse moving among the sand-hills; and I do not believe he was ever able to divest himself of that impression." No—and, according to Arab interpretation, very naturally so; for, according to their faith, he really *had* seen the horsemen; phantom horsemen certainly, but still objects of sight. The sequel remains to be told. By the Arabian hypothesis, Mr. Ramsay had but a short time to live—he was under a secret summons

however unaccountable as an effect. So again, if, in a large majority of experiences like those of Lord Lindsay's party in the desert, death should follow, such a phenomenon is as well entitled to its separate valuation as any other.

to the next world; and accordingly, in a few weeks after this, whilst Lord Lindsay had gone to visit Palmyra, Mr. Ramsay died at Damascus.

This was a case exactly corresponding to the Pagan *nympholepsis*—he had seen the beings whom it is not lawful to see and live. Another case of eastern superstition, not less determined, and not less remarkably fulfilled, occurred some years before to Dr. Madden, who travelled pretty much in the same route as Lord Lindsay. The doctor, as a phrenologist, had been struck with the very singular conformation of a skull which he saw amongst many others on an altar in some Syrian convent. He offered a considerable sum in gold for it; but it was by repute the skull of a saint; and the monk with whom Dr. Madden attempted to negotiate, not only refused his offers, but protested that even for the doctor's sake, apart from the interests of the convent, he could not venture on such a transfer: for that, by the tradition attached to it, the skull would endanger any vessel carrying it from the Syrian shore; the vessel might escape; but it would never succeed in reaching any but a Syrian harbour. After this, for the credit of our country, which stands so high in the East, and should be so punctiliously tended by all Englishmen, I am sorry to record that Dr. Madden (though otherwise a man of scrupulous honour) yielded to the temptation of substituting for the saint's skull another less remarkable from his own collection. With this saintly relic he embarked on board a Grecian ship; was alternately pursued and met by storms the most violent; larboard and starboard, on every quarter, he was buffeted; the wind blew from every point of the compass; the doctor honestly confesses that he often wished this baleful skull back in safety on the quiet altar from which he took it; and finally, after many days of anxiety, he was too happy in finding himself quietly restored to some oriental port, from which he secretly vowed never again to sail with a saint's skull, or with any skull, however remarkable phrenologically, that had not been paid for in an open market.

Thus I have pursued, through many of its most memorable sections, the spirit of the miraculous as it moulded and gathered itself in the superstitions of Paganism; and I have shown that, in the modern superstitions of Christianity, or of Mahometanism (often enough borrowed from Christian sources), there is a pretty regular correspondence. Speaking with a reference to the strictly popular belief, it cannot be pretended for a moment that miraculous agencies are slumbering in modern ages. For

one superstition of that nature which the Pagans had, we can produce twenty. And if, from the collation of numbers, we should pass to that of quality, it is a matter of notoriety, that from the very philosophy of Paganism and its slight root in the terrors or profounder mysteries of spiritual nature, no comparison could be sustained for a moment between the true religion and any mode whatever of the false. Ghosts I have purposely omitted, because that idea is so peculiarly Christian [1] as to reject all counterparts or affinities from other modes of the supernatural. The Christian ghost is too awful a presence, and with too large a substratum of the real, the impassioned, the human, for my present purposes. I deal chiefly with the wilder and more aerial forms of superstition; not so far off from fleshly nature as the purely allegoric—not so near as the penal, the purgatorial, the penitential. In this middle class, "Gabriel's hounds"—the "phantom ship"—the gloomy legends of the charcoal-burners in the German forests—and the local or epichorial superstitions from every district of Europe, come forward by thousands, attesting the high activity of the miraculous and the hyperphysical instincts, even in this generation, wheresoever the voice of the people makes itself heard.

But in Pagan times, it will be objected, the popular superstitions blended themselves with the highest political functions, gave a sanction to national counsels, and oftentimes gave their starting-point to the very primary movements of the state. Prophecies, omens, miracles, all worked concurrently with senates or princes. Whereas, in modern days, says Charles Lamb, the witch who takes her pleasure with the moon, and summons Beelzebub to her sabbaths, nevertheless trembles before the beadle, and hides herself from the constable. Now, as to the witch, even the horrid Canidia of Horace, or the more dreadful Erichtho of Lucan, seems hardly to have been much respected in any era. But for the other modes of the supernatural, they have entered into more frequent combinations with state functions and state movements in our modern ages than in the classical age of Paganism. Look at prophecies, for example: the Romans had a few obscure oracles afloat, and they had the Sibylline books under the state seal. These books,

[1] "*Because that idea is so peculiarly Christian:*"—One reason, additional to the main one, why the idea of a ghost could not be conceived or reproduced by Paganism, lies in the Pagan fourfold resolution of the human nature at death—viz. into—1. *corpus*; 2. *manes*; 3. *spiritus*; 4. *anima*. After such a dispersion of its separate elements, no restitution of the total nature or consciousness was possible.

in fact, had been kept so long, that, like port wine superannuated, they had lost their flavour and body.[1] On the other hand, look at France. Henry the historian, speaking of the fifteenth century, describes it as a national infirmity of the English to be prophecy-ridden. Perhaps there never was any foundation for this as an exclusive remark; but assuredly not in the next century. There had been amongst us British, from the twelfth century, Thomas of Ercildoune in the north, and many monkish local prophets for every part of the island; but latterly England had no terrific prophet, unless, indeed, Nixon of the Vale Royal in Cheshire, who uttered his dark oracles sometimes with a merely Cestrian, sometimes with a national reference. Whereas in France, throughout the sixteenth century, every principal event was foretold successively, with an accuracy that still shocks and confounds us. Francis I., who opens the century (and by many is held to open the book of *modern* history, as distinguished from the middle of *feudal* history), had the battle of Pavia foreshown to him, not by name, but in its results—by his own Spanish captivity—by the exchange for his own children upon a frontier river of Spain—finally, by his own disgraceful death, through an infamous disease conveyed to him under a deadly circuit of revenge. This king's son, Henry II., read some years *before* the event a description of that tournament, on the marriage of the Scottish queen with his eldest son, Francis II., which proved fatal to himself, through the awkwardness of the Compte de Montgomery and his own obstinacy. After this, and, I believe, a little after the brief reign of Francis II., arose Nostradamus, the great prophet of the age. All the children of Henry II. and of Catherine de Medici, one after the other, died in circumstances of suffering and horror; and Nostradamus pursued the whole with allusive omens. Charles IX., though the authoriser of the Bartholomew massacre, was

[1] "*Like port wine superannuated, the Sibylline books had lost their flavour and body:*"—There is an allegoric description in verse, by a modern poet, of an ice-house, in which Winter is described as a captive, etc. It is memorable on this account, that a brother poet mistook it (from not understanding the allegorical expressions), either sincerely or maliciously, for a description of the house-dog. Now this little anecdote seems to embody the poor Sibyl's history—from a stern icy sovereign, some grand abstraction of frost with a petrific mace, she lapsed into an old toothless mastiff. She continued to snore in her ancient kennel for above a thousand years. The last person who attempted to stir her up with a long pole, and to extract from her paralytic dreaming some growls or snarls against Christianity, was Aurelian, in a moment of public panic. But the thing was past all tampering. The poor creature could neither be kicked nor coaxed into vitality.

the least guilty of his party, and the only one who manifested a dreadful remorse. Henry III., the last of the brothers, died, as the reader will remember, by assassination. The youngest brother—viz., the Duke of Alençon, the suitor of our Queen Elizabeth, the same who, in his later days, after his brother Henry had become a king, took the title of Duke of Anjou—died in more abject misery even than the rest of his family. And all these tragic successions of events are still to be read, more or less dimly prefigured, in verses of which I will not here discuss the dates. Suffice it, that many authentic historians attest the good faith of the prophet; and finally, with respect to the first of the Bourbon dynasty, Henry IV., who succeeded upon the assassination of his brother-in-law, Henry III., we have the peremptory assurance of Sully and other Protestants, countersigned by writers both historical and controversial, that not only was he prepared, by many warnings, for his own tragical death—not only was the day, the hour, prefixed—not only was an almanack sent to him, in which the bloody summer's day of 1610 was pointed out to his attention in bloody colours; but the mere record of the king's last afternoon shows, beyond a doubt, the extent and the punctual limitation of his anxieties within a circuit of six hours. In fact, it is to this attitude of listening expectation in the king, and breathless waiting for the blow, that Schiller alludes in that fine speech of Wallenstein to his sister, where he notices the funeral knells that sounded continually in Henry's ears, and, above all, his prophetic instinct, that caught from a far distance the sound of his murderer's motions, and could distinguish, amidst all the tumult of a mighty capital, those stealthy steps

> "Which even then were seeking him
> Throughout the streets of Paris."

I, for my part, profess not to admire Henry IV. of France, whose secret and real character is best learned from the confidential report made by Sir G. Carew to the council or to the foreign secretary of Queen Elizabeth, during the two or three latter years of her reign. But one thing I have always very sincerely admired in him—viz., his courageous resignation to the appointments of Heaven, in dismissing his guards, as feeling that against a danger so domestic and so mysterious all fleshly arms were vain. This has always struck me as the most like magnanimity of anything in his very theatrical life.[1]

[1] By the way, it seems quite impossible for the stern and unconditional sceptic upon all modes of supernatural communication to reconcile his

Passing to our own country, and to the times immediately in succession, we fall upon some striking prophecies, not verbal but symbolic, if we turn from the broad highway of public histories to the by-paths of private memorials. Either Clarendon it is, in his Life (not his public history), or else Laud, who mentions an anecdote connected with the coronation of Charles I. (the son-in-law of the murdered Bourbon), which threw a gloom upon the spirits of the royal friends, already saddened by the dreadful pestilence which inaugurated the reign of this ill-fated prince, levying a tribute of one life in sixteen from the population of the English metropolis. The anecdote is this:—At the coronation of Charles, it was discovered that all London could not furnish the quantity of purple velvet required for the royal robes and the furniture of the throne. What was to be done? Decorum required that the furniture should be all *en suite*. Nearer than Genoa no considerable addition could be expected. That would impose a delay of several weeks. Upon mature consideration, and chiefly of the many private interests that would suffer amongst the multitudes whom such a solemnity had called up from the country, it was resolved to robe the king in *white* velvet. But this, as it afterwards occurred, was the colour in which victims were arrayed. And thus, it was alleged, did the king's council establish an augury of evil. Three other ill omens, of some celebrity, occurred to Charles I.—viz., on occasion of creating his son Charles a knight of the Bath; secondly, at Oxford, some years after; and thirdly, at the bar of that tribunal which sat in judgment upon him.

The reign of his second son, James II., the next reign that could be considered an unfortunate reign, was inaugurated by the same evil omens. The day selected for the coronation (in 1685) was a day memorable for England—it was St. George's day, the 23rd of April—and entitled, even on a separate account, to be held a sacred day, as the birth-day of Shakespeare in 1564, and his death-day in 1616. The king saved a sum of sixty thousand pounds by cutting off the ordinary cavalcade from the Tower of London to Westminster. Even this was imprudent. It is well known that, amongst the lowest class of the English, there is an obstinate prejudice (though unsanctioned by law) with respect to the obligation imposed by the ceremony of coronation. So long as this ceremony is delayed, or mutilated,

own opinions with the circumstantial report of Henry's last hours, as gathered from Sully and others. That he was profoundly sensible of the danger that brooded over his person, is past all denying; now, whence was this sense derived?

they fancy that their obedience is a matter of mere prudence, liable to be enforced by arms, but not consecrated either by law or by religion. The change made by James was, therefore, highly imprudent; shorn of its antique traditionary usages, the yoke of conscience was lightened at a moment when it required a double ratification. Neither was this mutilation of the ancient ceremonial called for on motives of economy, since James was unusually rich. This voluntary arrangement was, therefore, a bad beginning; but the accidental omens were worse. They are thus reported by Blennerhassett (*History of England to the end of George I.*, vol. iv., p. 1760, printed at Newcastle-upon-Tyne: 1751). "The crown being too little for the king's head, was often in a tottering condition, and like to fall off." Even this was observed attentively by spectators of the most opposite feelings. But there was another simultaneous omen, which affected the Protestant enthusiasts, and the superstitious, whether Catholic or Protestant, still more alarmingly. "The same day the king's arms, pompously painted in the great altar window of a London church, suddenly fell down without apparent cause, and broke to pieces, whilst the rest of the window remained standing." Blennerhassett mutters the dark terrors which possessed himself and others. "These," says he, "were reckoned ill omens to the king."

In France, as the dreadful criminality of the French sovereigns through the seventeenth century began to tell powerfully, and reproduce itself in the miseries and tumults of the French populace through the eighteenth century, it is interesting to note the omens which unfolded themselves at intervals. A volume might be written upon them. The Bourbons renewed the picture of that fatal house which in Thebes offered to the Grecian observers the spectacle of successive auguries, emerging from darkness through three generations, *a plusieurs reprises*. Everybody knows the fatal pollution by calamity of the marriage pomps on the reception of Marie Antoinette in Paris; the numbers who perished are still spoken of obscurely as to the amount, and with shuddering awe for the unparalleled horrors standing in the background of this fatal reign.

But in the *Life of Goethe* is mentioned a still more portentous (though more shadowy) omen. In the pictorial decorations of the arras which adorned the pavilion raised for the reception of the princess on the French frontier, the first objects which met the Austrian archduchess, on being hailed as Dauphiness, was a succession of the most tragic groups from the most awful

section of the Grecian theatre. The next alliance of the same kind between the same great empires, in the persons of Napoleon and the Archduchess Marie Louisa, was overshadowed by equally unhappy omens (viz., at the ball given in celebration of that marriage by the Austrian ambassador), and, as we all remember, with the same unhappy results, within a brief period of five years.

Or, if we should resort to the fixed and monumental, rather than to the fleeting auguries of great nations—such, for instance, as were embodied in those *Palladia*, or protecting talismans, which capital cities, whether Pagan or Christian, glorified through a period of twenty-five hundred years—we shall find a long succession of these enchanted pledges, from the earliest precedent of Troy (whose palladium was undoubtedly a talisman), down to that equally memorable one, bearing the same name, at Western Rome. We may pass, by a vast transition of two and a half millennia, to that great talisman of Constantinople, the triple serpent (having perhaps an original reference to the Mosaic serpent of the wilderness, which healed the infected by the simple act of looking upon it). This great consecrated talisman, venerated equally by Christian, by Pagan, and by Mahometan, was struck on the head by Mahomet II., on that same day, May 29 of 1453, in which he mastered by storm this glorious city, the bulwark of Eastern Christendom, and the immediate rival of his own European throne at Adrianople. But mark the superfetation of omens—omen supervening upon omen, augury engrafted upon augury. The hour was a sad one for Christianity; just 720 years before the western horn of Islam had been rebutted in France, not by Frenchmen, but chiefly by Germans, under Charles Martel. But now it seemed as though another horn, even more vigorous, was preparing to assault Christendom from the eastern quarter. At this epoch, in the very hour of triumph, when the last of the Cæsars had glorified his station, and sealed his testimony by martyrdom, the fanatical sultan, riding to his stirrups in blood, and wielding that iron mace which had been his sole weapon, as well as cognisance, through the battle, advanced to the column round which the triple serpent soared spirally upwards. He smote the brazen talisman; he shattered one head; he left it mutilated as the record of his great revolution; but crush it, destroy it, he did not—as a symbol prefiguring the fortunes of Mahometanism: his people noticed that in the critical hour of fate, which stamped the sultan's acts with efficacy through ages,

he had been prompted by his secret genius only to "scotch the snake," not to crush it. Afterwards the fatal hour was gone by; and this imperfect augury has since concurred traditionally with the Mahometan prophecies about the Adrianople gate of Constantinople, to depress the ultimate hopes of Islam in the midst of all its insolence. The very haughtiest of the Mussulmans believe that the gate is already in existence through which the red Giaours (the *Russi*) shall pass to the conquest of Stamboul; and that everywhere, in Europe at least, the hat of Frangistan is destined to surmount the turban—the crescent to go down before the cross.

THE HOUSEHOLD WRECK[1]

"*To be weak*," we need not the great Archangel's voice to tell us, "*is to be miserable*." All weakness is suffering and humiliation, no matter for its mode or its subject. Beyond all other weakness, therefore, and by a sad prerogative, as more miserable than what is most miserable in all, that capital weakness of man which regards the *tenure* of his enjoyments and his power to protect, even for a moment, the crown of flowers—flowers, at the best, how frail and few!—which sometimes settles upon his haughty brow. There is no end, there never will be an end, of the lamentations which ascend from earth and the rebellious heart of her children upon this huge opprobrium of human pride—the everlasting mutabilities of all which man can grasp by his power or by his aspirations, the fragility of all which he inherits, and the hollowness visible amid the very raptures of enjoyment to every eye which looks for a moment underneath the draperies of the shadowy *present*, the hollowness, the blank treachery of hollowness, upon which all the pomps and vanities of life ultimately repose. This trite but unwearying theme, this impassioned commonplace of humanity, is the subject in every age of variation without end, from the poet, the rhetorician, the fabulist, the moralist, the divine, and the philosopher. All, amidst the sad vanity of their sighs and groans, labour to put on record and to establish this monotonous complaint, which needs not other record or evidence than those very sighs and groans. What is life? Darkness and formless vacancy for a beginning, or something beyond all beginning; then next a dim lotos of human consciousness, finding itself afloat upon the bosom of waters without a shore; then a few sunny smiles and many tears; a little love and infinite strife; whisperings from paradise and fierce mockeries from the anarchy of chaos; dust and ashes,

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, January 1838. As the late Professor Masson pointed out, the story was not reprinted by De Quincey himself in his Collective Edition; and only the first few pages of it were reprinted in Messrs. Black's reissue of that edition, with the title "The Juggernaut of Social Life."

and once more darkness circling round, as if from the beginning, and in this way rounding or making an island of our fantastic existence: *that* is human life, *that* the inevitable amount of man's laughter and his tears—of what he suffers and he does—of his motions this way and that way, to the right or to the left, backwards or forwards — of all his seeming realities and all his absolute negations—his shadowy pomps and his pompous shadows — of whatsoever he thinks, finds, makes or mars, creates or animates, loves, hates, or in dread hope anticipates; so it is, so it has been, so it will be for ever and ever.

Yet in the lowest deep there still yawns a lower deep; and in the vast halls of man's frailty there are separate and more gloomy chambers of a frailty more exquisite and consummate. We account it frailty that threescore years and ten make the upshot of man's pleasurable existence, and that far before that time is reached his beauty and his power have fallen among weeds and forgetfulness; but there is a frailty by comparison with which this ordinary flux of the human race seems to have a vast duration. Cases there are, and those not rare, in which a single week, a day, an hour, sweeps away all vestiges and landmarks of a memorable felicity; in which the ruin travels faster than the flying showers upon the mountain side, faster " than a musician scatters sounds;" in which " it was " and " it is not " are words of the self-same tongue in the self-same minute; in which the sun that at noon beheld all sound and prosperous long before its setting hour looks out upon a total wreck, and sometimes upon the total abolition of any fugitive memorial that there ever had been a vessel to be wrecked or a wreck to be obliterated.

These cases, though here spoken of rhetorically, are of daily occurrence; and, though they may seem few by comparison with the infinite millions of the species, they are many indeed if they be reckoned absolutely for themselves; and, throughout the limits of a whole nation, not a day passes over us but many families are robbed of their heads, or even swallowed up in ruin themselves, or their course turned out of the sunny beams into a dark wilderness. Shipwrecks and nightly conflagrations are sometimes, and especially among some nations, wholesale calamities; battles yet more so. Earthquakes, the famine, the pestilence, though rarer, are visitations yet wider in their desolation. Sickness and commercial ill luck, if narrower, are more frequent scourges. And most of all, or with most darkness in its train, comes the sickness of the brain—lunacy—which, visiting

nearly one thousand in every million, must, in every populous nation, make many ruins in each particular day. "Babylon in ruins," says a great author, "is not so sad a sight as a human soul overthrown by lunacy." But there is a sadder even than *that;* the sight of a family ruin wrought by crime is even more appalling. Forgery, breaches of trust, embezzlement of private or public funds (a crime sadly on the increase since the example of Fauntleroy and the suggestion of its great feasibility first made by him)—these enormities, followed too often, and countersigned for their final result to the future happiness of families, by the appalling catastrophe of suicide, must naturally, in every wealthy nation, or wherever property and the modes of property are much developed, constitute the vast majority of all that come under the review of public justice. Any of these is sufficient to make shipwreck of all peace and comfort for a family; and often indeed it happens that the desolation is accomplished within the course of one revolving sun; often the whole dire catastrophe, together with its total consequences, is both accomplished and made known to those whom it chiefly concerns within one and the same hour. The mighty Juggernaut of social life, moving onwards with its everlasting thunders, pauses not for a moment to spare, to pity, to look aside, but rushes forward for ever, impassive as the marble in the quarry, caring not for whom it destroys, for the how many, or for the results direct and indirect, whether many or few. The increasing grandeur and magnitude of the social system, the more it multiplies and extends its victims, the more it conceals them, and for the very same reason; just as in the Roman amphitheatres, when they grew to the magnitude of mighty cities (in some instances accommodating four hundred thousand spectators, in many a fifth part of that amount), births and deaths became ordinary events, which in a small modern theatre are rare and memorable; and, exactly as these prodigious accidents multiplied, *pari passu* they were disregarded and easily concealed; for curiosity was no longer excited; the sensation attached to them was little or none.

From these terrific tragedies, which, like monsoons or tornadoes, accomplish the work of years in an hour, not merely an impressive lesson is derived—sometimes, perhaps, a warning—but also (and this is of universal application) some consolation. Whatever may have been the misfortunes or the sorrows of a man's life, he is still privileged to regard himself and his friends as amongst the fortunate by comparison, in so far as he has

escaped these wholesale storms, either as an actor in producing them, or a contributor to their violence, or even more innocently (though oftentimes not less miserably) as a participator in the instant ruin or in the long arrears of suffering which they entail.

The following story falls within the class of hasty tragedies and sudden desolations here described. The reader is assured that every incident is strictly true: nothing in that respect has been altered, nor indeed anywhere except in the conversations, of which, though the results and general outline are known, the separate details have necessarily been lost under the agitating circumstances which produced them. It has been judged right and delicate to conceal the name of the great city, and therefore of the nation, in which these events occurred—chiefly out of consideration for the descendants of one person concerned in the narrative. Otherwise it might not have been requisite; for it is proper to mention that every person directly a party to the case has been long laid in the grave—all of them, with one solitary exception, upwards of fifty years.

It was early spring in the year 17—. The day was the 6th of April; and the weather, which had been of a wintry fierceness for the preceding six or seven weeks—cold, indeed, beyond anything known for many years, gloomy for ever, and broken by continual storms—was now, by a Swedish transformation, all at once bright, genial, heavenly. So sudden and so early a prelusion of summer, it was generally feared, could not last. But that only made everybody the more eager to lose no hour of an enjoyment that might prove so fleeting. It seemed as if the whole population of the place—a population among the most numerous in Christendom—had been composed of hybernating animals suddenly awakened by the balmy sunshine from their long winter's torpor. Through every hour of the golden morning the streets were resonant with female parties of young and old, the timid and the bold—nay, even the most delicate valetudinarians, now first tempted to lay aside their wintry clothing, together with their fireside habits; whilst the whole rural environs of our vast city, the woodlands and the interminable meadows, began daily to re-echo the glad voices of the young and jovial, awaking once again, like the birds, and the flowers, and universal Nature, to the luxurious happiness of this most delightful season.

Happiness do I say? Yes, happiness—happiness to me above all others: for I also in those days was among the young

and the gay; I was healthy; I was strong; I was prosperous in a worldly sense; I owed no man a shilling, feared no man's face, shunned no man's presence; I held a respectable station in society; I was myself, let me venture to say it, respected generally for my personal qualities, apart from any advantages I might draw from fortune or inheritance; I had reason to think myself popular amongst the very slender circle of my acquaintance; and, finally, which perhaps was the crowning grace to all these elements of happiness, I suffered not from the presence of *ennui*, nor ever feared to suffer; for my temperament was constitutionally ardent. I had a powerful animal sensibility, and I knew the one great secret for maintaining its equipoise: viz., by powerful daily exercise. And thus I lived in the light and presence, or, if I should not be suspected of seeking rhetorical expressions, I would say, in one eternal solstice of unclouded hope.

These, you will say, were blessings; these were golden elements of felicity. They were so; and yet, with the single exception of my healthy frame and fine animal organisation, I feel that I have mentioned hitherto nothing but what by comparison might be thought of a vulgar quality. All the other advantages that I have enumerated, had they been yet wanting, might have been acquired; had they been forfeited, might have been reconquered; had they been even irretrievably lost, might, by a philosophic effort, have been dispensed with. Compensations might have been found for any of them—many equivalents, or, if not, consolations at least, for their absence. But now it remains to speak of other blessings too mighty to be valued, not merely as transcending in rank and dignity all other constituents of happiness, but for a reason far sadder than that—because, once lost, they were incapable of restoration, and because not to be dispensed with—blessings in which "either we must live or have no life"—lights to the darkness of our paths and to the infirmity of our steps, which, once extinguished, nevermore on this side the gates of paradise can any man hope to see re-illumined for himself. Amongst these I may mention an intellect, whether powerful or not in itself, at any rate most elaborately cultivated; and, to say the truth, I had little other business before me in this life than to pursue this lofty and delightful task. I may add, as a blessing not in the same *positive* sense as that which I have just mentioned, because not of a nature to contribute so hourly to the employment of the thoughts—but yet in this sense equal, that the absence of either

would have been an equal affliction: namely, a conscience void of all offence. It was little indeed that I, drawn by no necessities of situation into temptations of that nature, had done no injury to any man. That was fortunate; but I could not much value myself upon what was so much an accident of my situation. Something, however, I might pretend to beyond this *negative* merit: for I had originally a benign nature; and, as I advanced in years and thoughtfulness, the gratitude which possessed me for my own exceeding happiness led me to do that by principle and system which I had already done upon blind impulse; and thus upon a double argument I was incapable of turning away from the prayer of the afflicted, whatever had been the sacrifice to myself. Hardly, perhaps, could it have been said in a sufficient sense at that time that I was a religious man; yet undoubtedly I had all the foundations within me upon which religion might hereafter have grown. My heart overflowed with thankfulness to Providence; I had a natural tone of unaffected piety; and thus far, at least, I might have been called a religious man—that in the simplicity of truth I could have exclaimed—

"O Abner, I fear God; and I fear none beside."

But wherefore seek to delay ascending by a natural climax to that final consummation and perfect crown of my felicity—that almighty blessing which ratified their value to all the rest? Wherefore, O wherefore, do I shrink in miserable weakness from ——what? Is it from reviving, from calling up again into fierce and insufferable light, the images and features of a long-buried happiness? That would be a natural shrinking and a reasonable weakness. But how escape from reviving, whether I give it utterance or not, that which is for ever vividly before me? What need to call into artificial light that which, whether sleeping or waking, by night or by day, for eight-and-thirty years has seemed by its miserable splendour to scorch my brain? Wherefore shrink from giving language, simple vocal utterance, to that burden of anguish which by so long an endurance has lost no atom of its weight, nor can gain any most surely by the loudest publication? Need there can be none, after this, to say that the priceless blessing which I have left to the final place in this ascending review was the companion of my life—my darling and youthful wife. O dovelike woman! fated in an hour the most defenceless to meet with the ravening vulture; lamb fallen amongst wolves; trembling, fluttering fawn, whose path was inevitably to be crossed by the bloody tiger; angel, whose most

innocent heart fitted thee for too early a flight from this impure planet; if, indeed, it were a necessity that thou shouldst find no rest for thy footing except amidst thy native heavens—if, indeed, to leave what was not worthy of thee were a destiny not to be evaded, a summons not to be put by:—yet why, why, again and again I demand—why was it also necessary that this thy departure, so full of woe to me, should also to thyself be heralded by the pangs of martyrdom? Sainted love, if, like the ancient children of the Hebrews, like Meshach and Abednego, thou wert called by divine command, whilst yet almost a child, to walk, and to walk alone, through the fiery furnace, wherefore then couldst not thou, like that Meshach and that Abednego, walk unsinged by the dreadful torment and come forth unharmed? Why, if the sacrifice were to be total, was it necessary to reach it by so dire a struggle? And, if the cup, the bitter cup, of final separation from those that were the light of thy eyes and the pulse of thy heart might not be put aside, yet wherefore was it that thou mightest not drink it up in the natural peace which belongs to a sinless heart?

But these are murmurings, you will say, rebellious murmurings, against the proclamations of God. Not so. I have long since submitted myself, resigned myself, nay, even reconciled myself perhaps, to the great wreck of my life, in so far as it was the will of God, and according to the weakness of my imperfect nature. But my wrath still rises, like a towering flame, against all the earthly instruments of this ruin; I am still at times as unresigned as ever to this tragedy, in so far as it was the work of human malice. Vengeance, as a mission for *me*, as a task for *my* hands in particular, is no longer possible; the thunderbolts of retribution have been long since launched by other hands; and yet still it happens that at times I do, I must, I shall perhaps to the hour of death, rise in maniac fury, and seek, in the very impotence of vindictive madness, groping as it were in blindness of heart, for that tiger from hell-gates that tore away my darling from my heart. Let me pause, and interrupt this painful strain, to say a word or two upon what she was, and how far worthy of a love more honourable to her (that was possible) and deeper (but that was not possible) than mine. When first I saw her, she—my Agnes—was merely a child, not much (if anything) above sixteen; but, as in perfect womanhood she retained a most childlike expression of countenance, so even then in absolute childhood she put forward the blossoms and the dignity of a woman. Never yet did my eye light upon creature that was

born of woman, nor could it enter my heart to conceive one, possessing a figure more matchless in its proportions, more statuesque, and more deliberately and advisedly to be characterised by no adequate word but the word *magnificent* (a word too often and lightly abused). In reality, speaking of women, I have seen many beautiful figures, but hardly one except Agnes that could, without hyperbole, be styled truly and memorably magnificent. Though in the first order of tall women, yet, being full in person and with a symmetry that was absolutely faultless, she seemed to the random sight as little above the ordinary height. Possibly from the dignity of her person, assisted by the dignity of her movements, a stranger would have been disposed to call her at a distance a woman of *commanding* presence, but never after he had approached near enough to behold her face. Every thought of artifice, of practised effect, or of haughty pretension fled before the childlike innocence, the sweet feminine timidity, and the more than cherub loveliness of that countenance, which yet in its lineaments was noble, whilst its expression was purely gentle and confiding. A shade of pensiveness there was about her; but *that* was in her manners, scarcely ever in her features; and the exquisite fairness of her complexion, enriched by the very sweetest and most delicate bloom that ever I have beheld, should rather have allied it to a tone of cheerfulness. Looking at this noble creature, as I first looked at her when yet upon the early threshold of womanhood—

> "With household motions light and free,
> And steps of virgin liberty,"—

you might have supposed her some Hebe or young Aurora of the dawn. When you saw only her superb figure and its promise of womanly development, with the measured dignity of her step, you might for a moment have fancied her some imperial Medea of the Athenian stage, some Volumnia from Rome—

> "Or ruling bandit's wife amidst the Grecian isles."

But catch one glance from her angelic countenance, and then, combining the face and the person, you would have dismissed all such fancies, and have pronounced her a Pandora or an Eve, expressly accomplished and held forth by Nature as an exemplary model or ideal pattern for the future female sex—

> "A perfect woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, to command;
> And yet a spirit, too, and bright
> With something of an angel light."

To this superb young woman, such as I have here sketched her, I surrendered my heart for ever almost from my first opportunity of seeing her; for so natural and without disguise was her character and so winning the simplicity of her manners, due in part to her own native dignity of mind and in part to the deep solitude in which she had been reared, that little penetration was required to put me in possession of all her thoughts, and to win her love—not very much more than to let her see, as see she could not avoid, in connection with that chivalrous homage which at any rate was due to her sex and her sexual perfections, a love for herself on my part which was in its nature as exalted a passion and as profoundly rooted as any merely human affection can ever yet have been.

On the seventeenth birthday of Agnes we were married. O calendar of everlasting months—months that, like the mighty rivers, shall flow on for ever, immortal as thou, Nile, or Danube, Euphrates, or St. Lawrence—and ye, summer and winter, day and night, wherefore do you bring round continually your signs, and seasons, and revolving hours, that still point and barb the anguish of local recollections, telling me of this and that celestial morning that never shall return, and of too blessed expectations, travelling like yourselves through a heavenly zodiac of changes, till at once and for ever they sank into the grave? Often do I think of seeking for some quiet cell, either in the tropics or in arctic latitudes, where the changes of the year, and the external signs corresponding to them, express themselves by no features like those in which the same seasons are invested under our temperate climes; so that, if knowing, we cannot at least feel the identity of their revolutions. We were married, I have said, on the birthday—the seventeenth birthday—of Agnes; and pretty nearly on her eighteenth it was that she placed me at the summit of my happiness, whilst for herself she thus completed the circle of her relations to this life's duties, by presenting me with a son. Of this child, knowing how wearisome to strangers is the fond exultation of parents, I shall simply say that he inherited his mother's beauty—the same touching loveliness and innocence of expression, the same chiselled nose, mouth, and chin, the same exquisite auburn hair. In many other features, not of person merely, but also of mind and manners, as they gradually began to open before me, this child deepened my love to him by recalling the image of his mother; and what other image was there that I so much wished to keep before me, whether waking or asleep? At the time to which I am now

coming but too rapidly, this child, still our only one, and unusually premature, was within four months of completing his third year; consequently Agnes was at that time in her twenty-first year; and I may here add, with respect to myself, that I was in my twenty-sixth.

But, before I come to that period of woe, let me say one word on the temper of mind which so fluent and serene a current of prosperity may be thought to have generated. Too common a course I know it is when the stream of life flows with absolute tranquillity, and ruffled by no menace of a breeze, the azure overhead never dimmed by a passing cloud, that in such circumstances the blood stagnates; life, from excess and plethora of sweets, becomes insipid; the spirit of action droops; and it is oftentimes found at such seasons that slight annoyances and molestations, or even misfortunes in a lower key, are not wholly undesirable as means of stimulating the lazy energies, and disturbing a slumber which is, or soon will be, morbid in its character. I have known myself cases not a few where, by the very nicest gradations and by steps too silent and insensible for daily notice, the utmost harmony and reciprocal love had shaded down into fretfulness and petulance, purely from too easy a life, and because all nobler agitations that might have ruffled the sensations occasionally, and all distresses even on the narrowest scale that might have reawakened the solicitudes of love, by opening necessities for sympathy, for counsel, or for mutual aid, had been shut out by foresight too elaborate or by prosperity too cloying. But all this, had it otherwise been possible with my particular mind and at my early age, was utterly precluded by one remarkable peculiarity in my temper. Whether it were that I derived from Nature some jealousy and suspicion of all happiness which seems too perfect and unalloyed—(a spirit of restless distrust, which in ancient times often led men to throw valuable gems into the sea, in the hope of thus propitiating the dire deity of misfortune by voluntarily breaking the fearful chain of prosperity, and led some of them to weep and groan when the gems thus sacrificed were afterwards brought back to their hand by simple fishermen, who had recovered them in the intestines of fishes—a portentous omen, which was interpreted into a sorrowful indication that the deity thus answered the propitiatory appeal, and made solemn proclamation that he had rejected it)—whether, I say, it were this spirit of jealousy awaked in me by too steady and too profound a felicity; or whether it were that great overthrows and calamities have

some mysterious power to send forward a dim misgiving of their advancing footsteps, and really and indeed

"That in to-day already walks to-morrow;"

or whether it were partly, as I have already put the case in my first supposition, a natural instinct of distrust, but irritated and enlivened by a particular shock of superstitious alarm: which, or whether any, of these causes it were that kept me apprehensive and on the watch for disastrous change, I will not here undertake to determine. Too certain it is that I was so. I never ridded myself of an overmastering and brooding sense, shadowy and vague, a dim abiding feeling (that sometimes was and sometimes was not exalted into a conscious presentiment) of some great calamity travelling towards me, not perhaps immediately impending, perhaps even at a great distance, but already dating from some secret hour—already in motion upon some remote line of approach. This feeling I could not assuage by sharing it with Agnes. No motive could be strong enough for persuading me to communicate so gloomy a thought with one who, considering her extreme healthiness, was but too remarkably prone to pensive, if not to sorrowful, contemplations. And thus the obligation which I felt to silence and reserve strengthened the morbid impression I had received; whilst the remarkable incident I had adverted to served powerfully to rivet the superstitious chain which was continually gathering round me. The incident was this; and, before I repeat it, let me pledge my word of honour that I report to you the bare facts of the case, without exaggeration, and in the simplicity of truth. There was at that time resident in the great city which is the scene of my narrative a woman from some part of Hungary, who pretended to the gift of looking into futurity. She had made herself known advantageously in several of the greatest cities of Europe under the designation of the Hungarian Prophetess, and very extraordinary instances were cited amongst the highest circles of her success in the art which she professed. So ample were the pecuniary tributes which she levied upon the hopes, and the fears, or the simple curiosity of the aristocracy, that she was thus able to display not unfrequently a disinterestedness and a generosity, which seemed native to her disposition, amongst the humbler classes of her applicants; for she rejected no addresses that were made to her, provided only they were not expressed in levity or scorn, but with sincerity and in a spirit of confiding respect. It happened on one occa-

sion, when a nursery servant of ours was waiting in her anteroom for the purpose of taking her turn in consulting the prophetess professionally, that she had witnessed a scene of consternation and unaffected maternal grief in this Hungarian lady upon the sudden seizure of her son, a child of four or five years old, by a spasmodic inflammation of the throat (since called croup) peculiar to children, and in those days not very well understood by medical men. The poor Hungarian, who had lived chiefly in warm, or at least not damp, climates, and had never so much as heard of this complaint, was almost wild with alarm at the rapid increase of the symptoms which attend the paroxysms, and especially of that loud and distressing sound which marks the impeded respiration. Great, therefore, was her joy and gratitude on finding from our servant that she had herself been in attendance more than once upon cases of the same nature, but very much more violent; and that, consequently, she was well qualified to suggest and to superintend all the measures of instant necessity, such as the hot bath, the peculiar medicines, etc., which are almost sure of success when applied in an early stage. Staying to give her assistance until a considerable improvement had taken place in the child, our servant then hurried home to her mistress. Agnes, it may be imagined, despatched her back with such further and more precise directions as in a very short time availed to re-establish the child in convalescence. These practical services, and the messages of maternal sympathy repeatedly conveyed from Agnes, had completely won the heart of the grateful Hungarian; and she announced her intention of calling with her little boy, to make her personal acknowledgments for the kindness which had been shown to her. She did so; and we were as much impressed by the sultana-like style of her Oriental beauty, as she, on her part, was touched and captivated by the youthful loveliness of my angelic wife. After sitting for above an hour, during which time she talked with a simplicity and good feeling that struck us as remarkable in a person professing an art usually connected with so much of conscious fraud, she rose to take her leave. I must mention that she had previously had our little boy sitting on her knee, and had, at intervals, thrown a hasty glance upon the palms of his hands. On parting, Agnes, with her usual frankness, held out her hand. The Hungarian took it with an air of sad solemnity, pressed it fervently, and said, "Lady, it is my part in this life to look behind the curtain of fate; and oftentimes I see such sights in

futurity—some near, some far off—as willingly I would *not* see. For you, young and charming lady, looking like that angel which you are, no destiny can be equal to your deserts. Yet sometimes, true it is, God sees not as man sees; and he ordains, after his unfathomable counsels, to the heavenly-minded a portion in heaven, and to the children whom he loves a rest and a haven not built with hands. Something that I have seen dimly warns me to look no farther. Yet, if you desire it, I will do my office, and I will read for you with truth the lines of fate as they are written upon your hands." Agnes was a little startled, or even shocked, by this solemn address; but in a minute or so, a mixed feeling—one half of which was curiosity, and the other half a lighthearted mockery of her own mysterious awe in the presence of what she had been taught to view as either fraud or insanity—prompted her playfully to insist upon the fullest application of the Hungarian's art to her own case; nay, she would have the hands of our little Francis read and interpreted as well as her own; and she desired to hear the full professional judgment delivered without suppression or softening of its harshest awards. She laughed whilst she said all this, but she also trembled a little. The Hungarian first took the hand of our young child, and perused it with a long and steady scrutiny. She said nothing, but sighed heavily, as she resigned it. She then took the hand of Agnes, looked bewildered and aghast, then gazed piteously from Agnes to her child, and at last, bursting into tears, began to move steadily out of the room. I followed her hastily, and remonstrated upon this conduct by pointing her attention to the obvious truth—that these mysterious suppressions and insinuations, which left all shadowy and indistinct, were far more alarming than the most definite denunciations. Her answer yet rings in my ear: "Why should I make myself odious to you and to your innocent wife? Messenger of evil I am, and have been to many; but evil I will not prophesy to her. Watch and pray. Much may be done by effectual prayer. Human means, fleshly arms, are vain. There is an enemy in the house of life" (here she quitted her palmistry for the language of astrology); "there is a frightful danger at hand, both for your wife and your child. Already on that dark ocean over which we are all sailing I can see dimly the point at which the enemy's course shall cross your wife's. There is but little interval remaining—not many hours. All is finished; all is accomplished; and already he is almost up with the darlings of your heart. Be vigilant,

be vigilant; and yet look not to yourself, but to Heaven, for deliverance."

This woman was not an impostor; she spoke and uttered her oracles under a wild sense of possession by some superior being, and of mystic compulsion to say what she would have willingly left unsaid; and never yet, before or since, have I seen the light of sadness settle with so solemn an expression into human eyes as when she dropped my wife's hand and refused to deliver that burden of prophetic woe with which she believed herself to be inspired.

The prophetess departed; and what mood of mind did she leave behind her in Agnes and myself? Naturally there was a little drooping of spirits at first; the solemnity and the heart-felt sincerity of fear and grief which marked her demeanour made it impossible, at the moment when we were just fresh from their natural influences, that we should recoil into our ordinary spirits. But, with the inevitable elasticity of youth and youthful gaiety, we soon did so. We could not attempt to persuade ourselves that there had been any conscious fraud or any attempt at scenical effect in the Hungarian's conduct. She had no motive for deceiving us; she had refused all offerings of money; and her whole visit had evidently been made under an overflow of the most grateful feelings for the attentions shown to her child. We acquitted her, therefore, of sinister intentions; and with our feelings of jealousy, feelings in which we had been educated, towards everything that tended to superstition, we soon agreed to think her some gentle maniac or sad enthusiast, suffering under some form of morbid melancholy. Forty-eight hours, with two nights' sleep, sufficed to restore the wonted equilibrium of our spirits; and that interval brought us onwards to the 6th of April—the day on which, as I have already said, my story properly commences.

On that day, on that lovely 6th of April, such as I have described it—that 6th of April, about nine o'clock in the morning—we were seated at breakfast near the open window—we, that is, Agnes, myself, and little Francis. The freshness of morning spirits rested upon us; the golden light of the morning sun illuminated the room; incense was floating through the air from the gorgeous flowers within and without the house. There in youthful happiness we sat gathered together, a family of love; and there we never sat again. Never again were we three gathered together, nor ever shall be, so long as the sun and its golden light, the morning and the evening, the earth and its flowers, endure.

Often have I occupied myself in recalling every circumstance the most trivial of this the final morning of what merits to be called my life. Eleven o'clock, I remember, was striking when Agnes came into my study and said that she would go into the city (for we lived in a quite rural suburb), that she would execute some trifling commissions which she had received from a friend in the country, and would be at home again between one and two for a stroll which we had agreed to take in the neighbouring meadows. About twenty minutes after this she again came into my study, dressed for going abroad; for such was my admiration of her that I had a fancy—fancy it must have been, and yet still I felt it to be real—that under every change she looked best. If she put on a shawl, then a shawl became the most feminine of ornaments; if she laid aside her shawl and her bonnet, then how nymphlike she seemed in her undisguised and unadorned beauty! Full dress seemed for the time to be best, as bringing forward into relief the splendour of her person and allowing the exposure of her arms. A simple morning dress, again, seemed better still, as fitted to call out the childlike innocence of her face by confining the attention to that. But all these are feelings of fond and blind affection, hanging with rapture over the object of something too like idolatry. God knows, if that be a sin, I was but too profound a sinner; yet sin it never was, sin it could not be, to adore a beauty such as thine, my Agnes. Neither was it her beauty by itself, and that only, which I sought at such times to admire: there was a peculiar sort of double relation in which she stood at moments of pleasurable expectation and excitement, since our little Francis had become of an age to join our party, which made some aspects of her character trebly interesting. She was a wife, and wife to one whom she looked up to as her superior in understanding and in knowledge of the world; whom, therefore, she leaned to for protection. On the other hand, she was also a mother. Whilst, therefore, to her child she supported the matronly part of guide and the air of an experienced person, to me she wore, ingenuously and without disguise, the part of a child herself, with all the giddy hopes and unchastised imaginings of that buoyant age. This double character, one aspect of which looks towards her husband and one to her children, sits most gracefully upon many a young wife whose heart is pure and innocent; and the collision between the two separate parts, imposed by duty on the one hand, by extreme youth on the other—the one telling her that she is a responsible head of a

family and the depositary of her husband's honour in its tenderest and most vital interests; the other telling her, through the liveliest language of animal sensibility and through the very pulses of her blood, that she is herself a child—this collision gives an inexpressible charm to the whole demeanour of many a young married woman, making her other fascinations more touching to her husband and deepening the admiration she excites; and the more so, as it is a collision which cannot exist except among the very innocent. Years, at any rate, will irresistibly remove this peculiar charm, and gradually replace it by the graces of the matronly character. But in Agnes this change had not yet been effected, partly from nature, and partly from the extreme seclusion of her life. Hitherto she still retained the unaffected expression of her childlike nature; and so lovely in my eyes was this perfect exhibition of natural feminine character that she rarely or never went out alone upon any little errand to town which might require her to rely upon her own good sense and courage that she did not previously come to exhibit herself before me. Partly this was desired by me in that lover-like feeling of admiration, already explained, which leads one to court the sight of a beloved object under every change of dress and under all effects of novelty. Partly it was the interest I took in that exhibition of sweet timidity and almost childish apprehensiveness, half disguised or imperfectly acknowledged by herself, which (in the way I have just explained) so touchingly contrasted with (and for that very reason so touchingly drew forth) her matronly character.

But I hear some objector say at this point, Ought not this very timidity, founded (as in part at least it was) upon inexperience and conscious inability to face the dangers of the world, to have suggested reasons for not leaving her to her own protection? And does it not argue, on my part, an arrogant or too blind a confidence in the durability of my happiness, as though charmed against assaults and liable to no shocks of sudden revolution? I reply that, from the very constitution of society and the tone of manners in the city which we inhabited, there seemed to be a moral impossibility that any dangers of consequence should meet her in the course of those brief absences from my protection which only were possible; that even to herself any dangers of a nature to be anticipated under the known circumstances of the case seemed almost imaginary; that even *she* acknowledged a propriety in being trained, by slight and brief separations from my guardianship, to face more boldly those cases of longer

separation and of more absolute consignment to her own resources which circumstances might arise to create necessarily and perhaps abruptly. And it is evident that, had she been the wife of any man engaged in the duties of a profession, she might have been summoned from the very first, and without the possibility of any such gradual training, to the necessity of relying almost singly upon her own courage and discretion. For the other question, whether I did not depend too blindly and presumptuously upon my good luck in not at least affording her my protection so long as nothing occurred to make it impossible, I may reply, most truly, that all my feelings ran naturally in the very opposite channel. So far from confiding too much in my luck, in the present instance I was engaged in a task of writing upon some points of business which could not admit of further delay; but now, and at all times, I had a secret aversion to seeing so gentle a creature thrown even for an hour upon her own resources, though in situations which scarcely seemed to admit of any occasion for taxing these resources; and often I have felt anger towards myself for what appeared to be an irrational or effeminate timidity, and have struggled with my own mind upon occasions like the present, when I knew that I could not have acknowledged my tremors to a friend without something like shame and a fear to excite his ridicule. No; if in anything I ran into excess, it was in this very point of anxiety as to all that regarded my wife's security. Her good sense, her prudence, her courage (for courage she had in the midst of her timidity), her dignity of manner, the more impressive from the childlike character of her countenance—all should have combined to reassure me; and yet they did not. I was still anxious for her safety to an irrational extent; and, to sum up the whole in a most weighty line of Shakespeare, I lived under the constant presence of a feeling which only that great observer of human nature (so far as I am aware) has ever noticed; viz. that merely the excess of my happiness made me jealous of its ability to last, and in that extent less capable of enjoying it; that, in fact, the prelibation of my tears, as a homage to its fragility, was drawn forth by my very sense that my felicity was too exquisite; or, in the words of the great master—

"I wept to have [absolutely, by anticipation, shed tears in possessing] what I so feared to lose."

Thus end my explanations; and I now pursue my narrative. Agnes, as I have said, came into my room again before leaving the house. We conversed for five minutes; we parted; she

went out, her last words being that she would return at half-past one o'clock; and not long after that time, if ever mimic bells—bells of rejoicing or bells of mourning—are heard in desert spaces of the air and (as some have said) in unreal worlds that mock our own, and repeat for ridicule the vain and unprofitable motions of man, then too surely about this hour began to toll the funeral knell of my earthly happiness: its final hour had sounded.

. . . . . .

One o'clock had arrived. Fifteen minutes after I strolled into the garden, and began to look over the little garden gate in expectation of every moment descrying Agnes in the distance. Half an hour passed; and for ten minutes more I was tolerably quiet. From this time till half-past two I became constantly more agitated—*agitated*, perhaps, is too strong a word; but I was restless and anxious beyond what I should have chosen to acknowledge. Still I kept arguing, What is half an hour? What is an hour? A thousand things might have occurred to cause that delay, without needing to suppose an accident; or, if an accident, why not a very trifling one? She may have slightly hurt her foot; she may have slightly sprained her ankle. "O, doubtless," I exclaimed to myself, "it will be a mere trifle, or perhaps nothing at all." But I remember that, even whilst I was saying this, I took my hat and walked with nervous haste into the little quiet lane upon which our garden gate opened. The lane led by a few turnings, and after a course of about five hundred yards, into a broad high-road, which even at that day had begun to assume the character of a street, and allowed an unobstructed range of view in the direction of the city for at least a mile. Here I stationed myself; for the air was so clear that I could distinguish dress and figure to a much greater distance than usual. Even on such a day, however, the remote distance was hazy and indistinct; and at any other season I should have been diverted with the various mistakes I made. From occasional combinations of colour, modified by light and shade, and of course powerfully assisted by the creative state of the eye under this nervous apprehensiveness, I continued to shape into images of Agnes forms without end, that upon nearer approach presented the most grotesque contrasts to her impressive appearance. But I had ceased even to comprehend the ludicrous; my agitation was now so overruling and engrossing that I lost even my intellectual sense of it; and now first I understood practically and feelingly the anguish of hope alternating with disappoint-

ment, as it may be supposed to act upon the poor shipwrecked seaman, alone and upon a desolate coast, straining his sight forever to the fickle element which has betrayed him, but which only can deliver him, and with his eyes still tracing in the far distance

" Ships, dim discovered, dropping from the clouds,"

which a brief interval of suspense still forever disperses into hollow pageants of air or vapour. One deception melted away only to be succeeded by another. Still I fancied that at last to a certainty I could descry the tall figure of Agnes, her gipsy hat, and even the peculiar elegance of her walk. Often I went so far as to laugh at myself, and even to tax my recent fears with unmanliness and effeminacy, on recollecting the audible throbbings of my heart and the nervous palpitations which had besieged me; but these symptoms, whether effeminate or not, began to come back tumultuously under the gloomy doubts that succeeded almost before I had uttered this self-reproach. Still I found myself mocked and deluded with false hopes; yet still I renewed my quick walk and the intensity of my watch for that radiant form that was fated nevermore to be seen returning from the cruel city.

It was nearly half-past three, and therefore close upon two hours beyond the time fixed by Agnes for her return, when I became absolutely incapable of supporting the further torture of suspense; and I suddenly took the resolution of returning home and concerting with my female servants some energetic measures, though *what* I could hardly say, on behalf of their mistress. On entering the garden gate I met our little child Francis, who unconsciously inflicted a pang upon me which he neither could have meditated nor have understood. I passed him at his play, perhaps even unaware of his presence; but he recalled me to that perception by crying aloud that he had just seen his mamma.

" When? Where? " I asked convulsively.

" Upstairs, in her bedroom," was his instantaneous answer.

His manner was such as forbade me to suppose that he could be joking; and, as it was barely possible (though, for reasons well known to me, in the highest degree improbable) that Agnes might have returned by a bypath which, leading through a dangerous and disreputable suburb, would not have coincided at any one point with the public road where I had been keeping my station, I sprang forward into the house, upstairs, and in rapid succession into every room where it was likely that she

might be found. But everywhere there was a dead silence, disturbed only by myself; for, in my growing confusion of thought, I believe that I rang the bell violently in every room I entered. No such summons, however, was needed; for the servants, two of whom at the least were most faithful creatures and devotedly attached to their young mistress, stood ready of themselves to come and make inquiries of me as soon as they became aware of the alarming fact that I had returned without her.

Until this moment, though having some private reasons for surprise that she should have failed to come into the house for a minute or two at the hour prefixed, in order to make some promised domestic arrangements for the day, they had taken it for granted that she must have met with me at some distance from home, and that either the extreme beauty of the day had beguiled her of all petty household recollections, or (as a conjecture more in harmony with past experiences) that my impatience and solicitations had persuaded her to lay aside her own plans for the moment, at the risk of some little domestic inconvenience. Now, however, in a single instant vanished *every* mode of accounting for their mistress's absence; and the consternation of our looks communicated contagiously, by the most unerring of all languages, from each to the other, what thoughts were uppermost in our panic-stricken hearts. If to any person it should seem that our alarm was disproportioned to the occasion and not justified at least by anything as yet made known to us, let that person consider the weight due to the two following facts: first, that from the recency of our settlement in this neighbourhood, and from the extreme seclusion of my wife's previous life at a vast distance from the metropolis, she had positively no friends on her list of visitors who resided in this great capital; secondly, and far above all beside, let him remember the awful denunciations, so unexpectedly tallying with this alarming and mysterious absence, of the Hungarian prophetess. These had been slighted, almost dismissed from our thoughts; but now in sudden reaction they came back upon us with a frightful power to lacerate and to sting—the shadowy outline of a spiritual agency, such as that which could at all predict the events, combining in one mysterious effect with the shadowy outline of those very predictions. The power that could have predicted was as dim and as hard to grasp as was the precise nature of the evil that had been predicted.

An icy terror froze my blood at this moment when I looked at the significant glances, too easily understood by me, that were exchanged between the servants. My mouth had been for the last two hours growing more and more parched; so that at present, from mere want of moisture, I could not separate my lips to speak. One of the women saw the vain efforts I was making, and hastily brought me a glass of water. With the first recovery of speech, I asked them what little Francis had meant by saying that he had seen his mother in her bedroom. Their reply was that they were as much at a loss to discover his meaning as I was; that he had made the same assertion to them, and with so much earnestness that they had, all in succession, gone upstairs to look for her, and with the fullest expectation of finding her. This was a mystery which remained such to the very last. There was no doubt whatsoever that the child believed himself to have seen his mother; that he could not have seen her in her human bodily presence, there is as little doubt as there is, alas! that in this world he never *did* see her again. The poor child constantly adhered to his story, and with a circumstantiality far beyond all power of invention that could be presumed in an artless infant. Every attempt at puzzling him or entangling him in contradictions by means of cross-examination was but labour thrown away; though, indeed, it is true enough that for those attempts, as will soon be seen, there was but a brief interval allowed.

Not dwelling upon this subject at present, I turned to Hannah —a woman who held the nominal office of cook in our little establishment, but whose real duties had been much more about her mistress's person—and, with a searching look of appeal, I asked her whether, in this moment of trial, when (as she might see) I was not so perfectly master of myself as perhaps always to depend upon seeing what was best to be done, she would consent to accompany me into the city and take upon herself those obvious considerations of policy or prudence which might but too easily escape my mind, darkened and likely to be darkened, as to its power of discernment, by the hurricane of affliction now too probably at hand. She answered my appeal with the fervour I expected from what I had already known of her character. She was a woman of a strong, fiery, perhaps I might say of heroic mind, supported by a courage that was absolutely indomitable, and by a strength of bodily frame very unusual in a woman, and beyond the promise even of her person. She had suffered as deep a wrench in her own affections as a

human being can suffer; she had lost her one sole child, a fair-haired boy of most striking beauty and interesting disposition, at the age of seventeen, and by the worst of all possible fates. He lived (as we did at that time) in a large commercial city overflowing with profligacy and with temptations of every order. He had been led astray. Culpable he had been, but by very much the least culpable of the set into which accident had thrown him, as regarded acts and probable intentions; and, as regarded palliations from childish years, from total inexperience, or any other alleviating circumstances that could be urged, having everything to plead, and of all his accomplices the only one who had anything to plead. Interest, however, he had little or none; and, whilst some hoary villains of the party, who happened to be more powerfully befriended, were finally allowed to escape with a punishment little more than nominal, he and two others were selected as sacrifices to the offended laws. They suffered capitally. All three behaved well; but the poor boy, in particular, with a courage, a resignation, and a meekness so distinguished and beyond his years as to attract the admiration and the liveliest sympathy of the public universally. If strangers could feel in that way—if the mere hardened executioner could be melted at the final scene—it may be judged to what a fierce and terrific height would ascend the affliction of a doting mother, constitutionally too fervid in her affections. I have heard an official person declare that the spectacle of her desolation and frantic anguish was the most frightful thing he had ever witnessed, and so harrowing to the feelings that all who could by their rank venture upon such an irregularity absented themselves during the critical period from the office which corresponded with the government; for, as I have said, the affair took place in a large provincial city, at a great distance from the capital. All who knew this woman, or who were witnesses to the alteration which one fortnight had wrought in her person as well as her demeanour, fancied it impossible that she could continue to live; or that, if she did, it must be through the giving way of her reason. They proved, however, to be mistaken; or, at least, if (as some thought) her reason did suffer in some degree, this result showed itself in the inequality of her temper, in moody fits of abstraction, and the morbid energy of her manner at times under the absence of all adequate external excitement, rather than in any positive and apparent hallucinations of thought. The charm which had mainly carried off the instant danger to her faculties was doubtless the intense

sympathy which she met with. In these offices of consolation my wife stood foremost; for—and that was fortunate—she had found herself able, without violence to her own sincerest opinions in the case, to offer precisely that form of sympathy which was most soothing to the angry irritation of the poor mother. Not only had she shown a *direct* interest in the boy, and not a mere interest of *reflection* from that which she took in the mother, and had expressed it by visits to his dungeon and by every sort of attention to his comforts which his case called for or the prison regulations allowed—not only had she wept with the distracted woman as if for a brother of her own—but, which went farther than all the rest in softening the mother's heart, she had loudly and indignantly proclaimed her belief in the boy's innocence, and, in the same tone, her sense of the crying injustice committed as to the selection of the victims and the proportion of the punishment awarded. Others, in the language of a great poet—

"Had pitied *her*, and not her grief."

They had either not been able to see, or from carelessness had neglected to see, any peculiar wrong done to her in the matter which occasioned her grief, but had simply felt compassion for her as for one summoned, in a regular course of providential and human dispensation, to face an affliction heavy in itself, but not heavy from any special defect of equity. Consequently their very sympathy, being so much built upon the assumption that an only child had offended to the extent implied in his sentence, oftentimes clothed itself in expressions which she felt to be not consolations, but insults, and, in fact, so many justifications of those whom it relieved her overcharged heart to regard as the very worst of enemies. Agnes, on the other hand, took the very same view of the case as herself; and, though otherwise the gentlest of all gentle creatures, yet here, from the generous fervour of her reverence for justice and her abhorrence of oppression, she gave herself no trouble to moderate the energy of her language; nor did I, on my part, feeling that substantially she was in the right, think it of importance to dispute about the exact degrees of the wrong done or the indignation due to it. In this way it happened naturally enough that at one and the same time, though little contemplating either of these results, Agnes had done a prodigious service to the poor desolate mother by breaking the force of her misery, as well as by arming the active agencies of indignation against the depressing ones of solitary grief, and for herself had won a most grateful and

devoted friend, who would have gone through fire and water to serve her, and was thenceforwards most anxious for some opportunity to testify how deep had been her sense of the goodness shown to her by her benign young mistress, and how incapable of suffering abatement by time. It remains to add, which I have slightly noticed before, that this woman was of unusual personal strength: her bodily frame matched with her intellectual: and I notice this *now* with the more emphasis, because I am coming rapidly upon ground where it will be seen that this one qualification was of more summary importance to us—did us more "yeoman's service" at a crisis the most awful—than other qualities of greater name and pretension. *Hannah* was this woman's Christian name; and her name and her memory are to me amongst the most hallowed of my earthly recollections.

One of her two fellow-servants, known technically amongst us as the "parlour maid," was also, but not equally, attached to her mistress, and merely because her nature, less powerfully formed and endowed, did not allow her to entertain or to comprehend any service equally fervid of passion or of impassioned action. She, however, was good, affectionate, and worthy to be trusted. But a third there was, a nursery maid, and therefore more naturally and more immediately standing within the confidence of her mistress—her I could not trust; her I suspected. But of that hereafter. Meantime, Hannah, she upon whom I leaned as upon a staff in all which respected her mistress, ran upstairs, after I had spoken and received her answer, in order hastily to dress and prepare herself for going out along with me to the city. I did not ask her to be quick in her movements—I knew there was no need; and, whilst she was absent, I took up, in one of my fretful movements of nervousness, a book which was lying upon a side table. The book fell open of itself at a particular page, and in that, perhaps, there was nothing extraordinary; for it was a little portable edition of *Paradise Lost*, and the page was one which I must naturally have turned to many a time; for to Agnes I had read all the great masters of literature, especially those of modern times, so that few people knew the high classics more familiarly; and, as to the passage in question, from its divine beauty I had read it aloud to her perhaps on fifty separate occasions. All this I mention to take away any appearance of a vulgar attempt to create omens; but still, in the very act of confessing the simple truth, and thus weakening the marvellous character of the anecdote, I must

notice it as a strange instance of the "*Sortes Miltonianæ*" that precisely at such a moment as this I should find thrown in my way, should feel tempted to take up, and should open, a volume containing such a passage as the following. And observe, moreover, that, although the volume, *once being taken up*, would naturally open where it had been most frequently read, there were, however, many passages which had been read *as* frequently, or more so. The particular passage upon which I opened at this moment was that most beautiful one in which the fatal morning separation is described between Adam and his bride—that separation so pregnant with woe, which eventually proved the occasion of the mortal transgression—the last scene between our first parents at which both were innocent and both were happy; although the superior intellect already felt, and, in the slight altercation preceding this separation, had already expressed a dim misgiving of some coming change. These are the words, and in depths of pathos they have rarely been approached:—

> "Oft he to her his charge of quick return
> Repeated; she to him as oft engaged
> To be returned by noon amid the bower,
> And all things in best order to invite
> Noontide repast or afternoon's repose.
> O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve!
> Of thy presumed return, event perverse!
> Thou never from that hour in paradise
> Found'st either sweet repast or sound repose."

"*My* Eve!" I exclaimed, "partner in *my* paradise, where art thou? *Much failing* thou wilt not be found, nor *much deceived;* innocent in any case thou art; but, alas! too surely by this time *hapless*, and the victim of some diabolic wickedness." Thus I murmured to myself; thus I ejaculated; thus I apostrophised my Agnes. Then again came a stormier mood. I could not sit still; I could not stand in quiet; I threw the book from me with violence against the wall; I began to hurry backwards and forwards in a short, uneasy walk; when suddenly, a sound, a step; it was the sound of the garden gate opening, followed by a hasty tread. Whose tread? Not for a moment could it be fancied the dread step which belonged to that daughter of the hills—my wife, my Agnes. No; it was the dull, massy tread of a man; and immediately there came a loud blow upon the door, and in the next moment, the bell having been found, a furious peal of ringing. O coward heart! not for a lease of immortality could I have gone forwards

myself. My breath failed me; an interval came in which respiration seemed to be stifled, the blood to halt in its current; and then and there I recognised in myself the force and living truth of that scriptural description of a heart consciously beset by evil without escape: "Susannah *sighed*." Yes, a long, long sigh—a deep, deep sigh; that is the natural language by which the overcharged heart utters forth the woe that else would break it. I sighed—O how profoundly! But that did not give me power to move. Who will go to the door? I whispered audibly. Who is at the door? was the inaudible whisper of my heart. Then might be seen the characteristic differences of the three women. That one whom I suspected I heard raising an upper window to look out and reconnoitre. The affectionate Rachel, on the other hand, ran eagerly downstairs; but Hannah, half dressed, even her bosom exposed, passed her like a storm; and, before I heard any sound of opening a door, I saw from the spot where I stood the door already wide open, and a man in the costume of a policeman. All that he said I could not hear; but this I heard, that I was wanted at the police office, and had better come off without delay. He seemed then to get a glimpse of me and to make an effort towards coming nearer; but I slunk away, and left to Hannah the task of drawing from him any circumstances which he might know. But apparently there was not much to tell; or rather, said I, there is too much—the *much* absorbs the *many;* some one mighty evil transcends and quells all particulars. At length the door was closed, and the man was gone. Hannah crept slowly along the passage and looked in hesitatingly. Her very movements and stealthy pace testified that she had heard nothing which, even by comparison, she could think good news. "Tell me not now, Hannah," I said; "wait till we are in the open air." She went upstairs again. How short seemed the time till she descended! How I longed for further respite! "Hannah!" I said at length when we were fairly moving upon the road, "Hannah! I am too sure you have nothing good to tell. But now tell me the worst, and let that be in the fewest words possible."

"Sir," she said, "we had better wait until we reach the office; for really I could not understand the man. He says that my mistress is detained upon some charge; but *what*, I could not at all make out. He was a man that knew something of you, sir, I believe; and he wished to be civil, and kept saying, 'O, I dare say it will turn out nothing at all; many such charges are made idly and carelessly, and some maliciously.' 'But

what charges?' I cried; and then he wanted to speak privately to you. But I told him that of all persons he must not speak to you if he had anything painful to tell; for that you were too much disturbed already, and had been for some hours, out of anxiety and terror about my mistress, to bear much more. So, when he heard that, he was less willing to speak freely than before. He might prove wrong, he said; he might give offence; things might turn out far otherwise than according to first appearances. For his part, he could not believe anything amiss of so sweet a lady. And, after all, it would be better to wait till we reached the office."

Thus much then was clear—Agnes was under some accusation. This was already worse than the worst I had anticipated. "And then," said I, thinking aloud to Hannah, "one of two things is apparent to me: either the accusation is one of pure hellish malice, without a colour of probability or the shadow of a foundation, and that way, alas! I am driven in my fears by that Hungarian woman's prophecy; or, which but for my desponding heart I should be more inclined to think, the charge has grown out of my poor wife's rustic ignorance as to the usages then recently established by law with regard to the kind of money that could be legally tendered. This, however, was a suggestion that did not tend to alleviate my anxiety; and my nervousness had mounted to a painful, almost to a disabling, degree, by the time we reached the office. Already on our road thither some parties has passed us who were conversing with eagerness upon the case. So much we collected from the many and ardent expressions about "the lady's beauty," though the rest of such words as we could catch were ill calculated to relieve my suspense. This, then, at least, was certain—that my poor timid Agnes had already been exhibited before a tumultuous crowd; that her name and reputation had gone forth as a subject of discussion for the public; and that the domestic seclusion and privacy within which it was her matronly privilege to move had already undergone a rude violation.

The office, and all the purlieus of the office, were occupied by a dense crowd. That, perhaps, was always the case, more or less, at this time of day; but at present the crowd was manifestly possessed by a more than ordinary interest; and there was a unity in this possessing interest. All were talking on the same subject—the case in which Agnes had so recently appeared in some character or other; and by this time it became but too certain in the character of an accused person. Pity was

the prevailing sentiment amongst the mob; but the opinions varied much as to the probable criminality of the prisoner. I made my way into the office. The presiding magistrates had all retired for the afternoon, and would not reassemble until eight o'clock in the evening. Some clerks only or officers of the court remained, who were too much harassed by applications for various forms and papers connected with the routine of public business, and by other official duties which required signatures or attestations, to find much leisure for answering individual questions. Some, however, listened with a marked air of attention to my earnest request for the circumstantial details of the case; but finally referred me to a vast folio volume, in which were entered all the charges, of whatever nature, involving any serious tendency—in fact, all that exceeded a misdemeanour—in the regular chronological succession according to which they came before the magistrate. Here, in this vast calendar of guilt and misery, amidst the *aliases* or cant designations of ruffians, prostitutes, felons, stood the description, at full length, Christian and surnames all properly registered, of my Agnes—of her whose very name had always sounded to my ears like the very echo of mountain innocence, purity, and pastoral simplicity. Here in another column stood the name and residence of her accuser. I shall call him *Barratt;* for that was amongst his names, and a name by which he had at one period of his infamous life been known to the public, though not his principal name or the one which he had thought fit to assume at this era. James Barratt, then, as I shall here call him, was a haberdasher, keeping a large and conspicuous shop in a very crowded, and what was then considered a fashionable, part of the city. The charge was plain and short. Did I live to read it? It accused Agnes M—— of having on that morning secreted in her muff, and feloniously carried away, a valuable piece of Mechlin lace, the property of James Barratt; and the result of the first examination was thus communicated in a separate column, written in red ink: "Remanded to the second day after to-morrow for final examination." Everything in this sin-polluted register was in manuscript; but at night the records of each day were regularly transferred to a printed journal, enlarged by comments and explanatory descriptions from some one of the clerks whose province it was to furnish this intelligence, to the public journals. On that same night, therefore, would go forth to the world such an account of the case, and such a description of my wife's person, as would inevitably summon to the next exhibition of

her misery, as by special invitation and advertisement, the whole world of this vast metropolis—the idle, the curious, the brutal, the hardened amateur in spectacles of woe, and the benign philanthropist who frequents such scenes with the purpose of carrying alleviation to their afflictions. All alike, whatever might be their motives or the spirit of their actions, would rush (as to some grand festival of curiosity and sentimental luxury) to this public martyrdom of my innocent wife.

Meantime, what was the first thing to be done? Manifestly, to see Agnes: her account of the affair might suggest the steps to be taken. Prudence, therefore, at any rate, prescribed this course; and my heart would not have tolerated any other. I applied, therefore, at once for information as to the proper mode of effecting this purpose without delay. What was my horror at learning that, by a recent regulation of all the police offices, under the direction of the public minister who presided over that department of the national administration, no person could be admitted to an interview with any accused party during the progress of the official examinations, or, in fact, until the final committal of the prisoner for trial! This rule was supposed to be attended by great public advantages, and had rarely been relaxed—never, indeed, without a special interposition of the police minister authorising its suspension. But was the exclusion absolute and universal? Might not, at least, a female servant, simply as the bearer of such articles as were indispensable to female delicacy and comfort, have access to her mistress? No; the exclusion was total and unconditional. To argue the point was manifestly idle: the subordinate officers had no discretion in the matter; nor, in fact, had any other official person, whatever were his rank, except the supreme one; and to him I neither had any obvious means of introduction nor (in case of obtaining such an introduction) any chance of success; for the spirit of the rule, I foresaw it would be answered, applied with especial force to cases like the present.

Mere human feelings of pity, sympathy with my too visible agitation, superadded to something of perhaps reverence for the blighting misery that was now opening its artillery upon me—for misery has a privilege, and everywhere is felt to be a holy thing—had combined to procure for me some attention and some indulgence hitherto. Answers had been given with precision, explanations made at length, and anxiety shown to satisfy my inquiries. But this could not last; the inexorable necessities of public business, coming back in a torrent upon the

official people after this momentary interruption, forbade them to indulge any further consideration for an individual case; and I saw that I must not stay any longer. I was rapidly coming to be regarded as a hindrance to the movement of public affairs; and the recollection that I might again have occasion for some appeal to these men in their official characters admonished me not to abuse my privilege of the moment. After returning thanks, therefore, for the disposition shown to oblige me, I retired.

Slowly did I and Hannah retrace our steps. Hannah sustained in the tone of her spirits, by the extremity of her anger, a mood of feeling which I did not share. Indignation was to her in the stead of consolation and hope. I, for my part, could not seek even a momentary shelter from any tempestuous affliction in that temper of mind. The man who could accuse my Agnes, and accuse her of such a crime, I felt to be a monster; and in my thoughts he was already doomed to a bloody atonement (atonement! alas! what atonement?) whenever the time arrived that *her* cause would not be prejudiced, or the current of public feeling made to turn in his favour by investing him with the semblance of an injured or suffering person. So much was settled in my thoughts with the stern serenity of a decree issuing from a judgment seat. But that gave no relief, no shadow of relief, to the misery which was now consuming me. Here was an end, in one hour, to the happiness of a life. In one hour it had given way, root and branch—had melted like so much frostwork or a pageant of vapoury exhalations. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and yet for ever and ever, I comprehended the total ruin of my situation. The case, as others might think, was yet in suspense; and there was room enough for very rational hopes, especially where there was an absolute certainty of innocence. Total freedom from all doubt on that point seemed to justify almost more than hopes. This might be said, and most people would have been more or less consoled by it. I was not. I felt as certain, as irredeemably, as hopelessly certain, of the final results as though I had seen the record in the books of heaven. "Hope nothing," I said to myself; "think not of hope in this world; but think only how best to walk steadily, and not to reel like a creature wanting discourse or reason, or incapable of religious hopes, under the burden which it has pleased God to impose, and which in this life cannot be shaken off. The countenance of man is made to look upward and to the skies. Thither also point henceforwards your heart and your thoughts. Never again let your thoughts travel earth-

wards. Settle them on the heavens, to which your Agnes is already summoned. The call is clear, and not to be mistaken. Little in *her* fate now depends upon you or upon anything that man can do. Look, therefore, to yourself; see that you make not shipwreck of your heavenly freight because your earthly freight is lost; and miss not, by any acts of wild and presumptuous despair, that final reunion with your Agnes which can only be descried through vistas that open through the heavens."

Such were the thoughts—thoughts often made audible—which came spontaneously like oracles from afar as I strode homewards with Hannah by my side. Her, meantime, I seemed to hear; for at times I seemed and I intended to answer her. But answer her I did not; for not ten words of all that she said did I really and consciously hear. How I went through that night is more entirely a blank in my memory, more entirely a chapter of chaos and the confusion of chaos, than any other passage the most impressive in my life. If I even slumbered for a moment, as at intervals I did sometimes, though never sitting down, but standing or pacing about throughout the night, and if in this way I attained a momentary respite from self-consciousness, no sooner had I reached this enviable state of oblivion than some internal sting of irritation *as* rapidly dispersed the whole fickle fabric of sleep, and as if the momentary trance—this fugitive beguilement of my woe—had been conceded by a demon's subtle malice only with the purpose of barbing the pang by thus forcing it into a stronger relief through the insidious peace preceding it. It is a well-known and most familiar experience to all the sons and daughters of affliction, that under no circumstances is the piercing, lancinating torment of a recent calamity felt so keenly as in the first moments of awaking in the morning from the night's slumbers. Just at the very instant when the clouds of sleep and the whole fantastic illusions of dreaminess are dispersing—just as the realities of life are re-assuming their steadfast forms, reshaping themselves, and settling anew into those fixed relations which they are to preserve thoughout the waking hours—in that particular crisis of transition from the unreal to the real, the woe which besieges the brain and the lifesprings at the heart rushes in afresh amongst the other crowd of realities, and has, at the moment of restoration, literally the force and liveliness of a new birth—the very same pang, and no whit feebler, as that which belonged to it when it was first made known. From the total hush of oblivion

which had buried it and sealed it up, as it were, during the sleeping hours, it starts into sudden life on our first awaking, and is to all intents and purposes a new, and not an old, affliction —one which brings with it the old original shock which attended its first annunciation.

That night, that first night of separation from my wife—*how* it passed I know not; I only know *that* it passed, I being in our common bed chamber, that holiest of all temples that are consecrated to human attachments whenever the heart is pure of man and woman and the love is strong—I being in that bed chamber, once the temple, now the sepulchre, of our happiness; I there, and my wife, my innocent wife, in a dungeon. As the morning light began to break, somebody knocked at the door: it was Hannah. She took my hand: misery levels all feeble distinctions of station, sex, age. She noticed my excessive feverishness, and gravely remonstrated with me upon the necessity there was that I should maintain as much health as possible for the sake of "others," if not for myself. She then brought me some tea, which refreshed me greatly; for I had tasted nothing at all beyond a little water since the preceding morning's breakfast. This refreshment seemed to relax and thaw the stiff, frozen state of cheerless, rayless despair in which I had passed the night. I became susceptible of consolation—that consolation which lies involved in kindness and gentleness of manner—if not susceptible more than before of any positive hope. I sat down; and, having no witnesses to my weakness but this kind and faithful woman, I wept, and I found a relief in tears; and she, with the ready sympathy of woman, wept along with me. All at once she ventured upon the circumstances (so far as she had been able to collect them from the reports of those who had been present at the examination) of our calamity. There was little indeed either to excite or to gratify any interest or curiosity separate from the *personal* interest inevitably connected with a case to which there were two such parties as a brutal, sensual, degraded ruffian on one side, in character of accuser, and on the other, as defendant, a meek angel of a woman, timid and fainting from the horrors of her situation, and under the licentious gaze of the crowd, yet, at the same time, bold in conscious innocence, and, in the very teeth of the suspicions which beset her, winning the good opinion as well as the good wishes of all who saw her. There had been at this first examination little for her to say beyond the assigning her name, age, and place of abode; and here it was fortunate that

her own excellent good sense concurred with her perfect integrity and intuitive hatred of all indirect or crooked courses in prompting her to an undisguised statement of the simple truth, without a momentary hesitation or attempt either at evasion or suppression. With equally good intentions in similar situations, many a woman has seriously injured her cause by slight evasions of the entire truth, where nevertheless her only purpose has been the natural and ingenuous one of seeking to save the reputation untainted of a name which she felt to have been confided to her keeping. The purpose was an honourable one, but erroneously pursued. Agnes fell into no such error. She answered calmly, simply, and truly to every question put by the magistrates; and beyond *that* there was little opportunity for her to speak, the whole business of this preliminary examination being confined to the deposition of the accuser as to the circumstances under which he alleged the act of felonious appropriation to have taken place. These circumstances were perfectly uninteresting considered in themselves; but amongst them was one which to us had the most shocking interest, from the absolute proof thus furnished of a deep-laid plot against Agnes. But for this one circumstance there would have been a possibility that the whole had originated in error—error growing out of and acting upon a nature originally suspicious, and confirmed, perhaps, by an unfortunate experience. And, in proportion as that was possible, the chances increased that the accuser might, as the examinations advanced and the winning character of the accused party began to develop itself, begin to see his error and to retract his own over-hasty suspicions. But now we saw at a glance that for this hope there was no countenance whatever, since one solitary circumstance sufficed to establish a conspiracy. The deposition bore that the lace had been secreted and afterwards detected in a muff. Now, it was a fact, as well known to both of us as the fact of Agnes having gone out at all, that she had laid aside her winter's dress for the first time on this genial, sunny day. Muff she had not at the time, nor could have had appropriately from the style of her costume in other respects. What was the effect upon us of this remarkable discovery? Of course there died at once the hope of any abandonment by the prosecutor of his purpose, because here was proof of a predetermined plot. This hope died at once; but then, as it was one which never had presented itself to my mind, I lost nothing by which I had ever been solaced. On the other hand, it will be obvious that a new hope at the same

time arose to take its place; viz. the reasonable one that by this single detection, if once established, we might raise a strong presumption of conspiracy, and, moreover, that, as a leading fact or clue, it might serve to guide us in detecting others. Hannah was sanguine in this expectation; and for a moment her hopes were contagiously exciting to mine. But the hideous despondency which in my mind had settled upon the whole affair from the very first, the superstitious presentiment I had of a total blight brooding over the entire harvest of my life and its promises (tracing itself originally, I am almost ashamed to own, up to that prediction of the Hungarian woman), denied me steady light, anything—all, in short, but a wandering ray of hope. It was right, of course—nay, indispensable—that the circumstance of the muff should be strongly insisted upon at the next examination, pressed against the prosecutor, and sifted to the uttermost. An able lawyer would turn this to a triumphant account, and it would be admirable as a means of pre-engaging the good opinion as well as the sympathies of the public on behalf of the prisoner. But, for its final effect, my conviction remained, not to be shaken, that all would be useless —that our doom had gone forth, and was irrevocable.

Let me not linger too much over those sad times. Morning came on as usual; for it is strange, but true, that to the very wretched it seems wonderful that times and seasons should keep their appointed courses in the midst of such mighty overthrows and such interruption to the courses of their own wonted happiness and their habitual expectations. Why should morning and night, why should all movements in the natural world, be so regular, whilst in the moral world all is so irregular and anomalous? Yet the sun and the moon rise and set as usual upon the mightiest revolutions of empire and of worldly fortune that this planet ever beholds; and it is sometimes even a comfort to know that this will be the case. A great criminal, sentenced to an agonising punishment, has derived a fortitude and a consolation from recollecting that the day would run its inevitable course; that a day, after all, was *but* a day; that the mighty wheel of alternate light and darkness must and would revolve; and that the evening star would rise as usual, and shine with its untroubled lustre upon the dust and ashes of what *had* indeed suffered, and so recently, the most bitter pangs, but would then have ceased to suffer. "La journée," said Damien—

"La journée sera dure, mais elle se passera."

"——*Se passera:*" yes, that is true, I whispered to myself; my day also, my season of trial, will be hard to bear; but that also will have an end; that also "*se passera.*" Thus I talked or thought so long as I thought at all; for the hour was now rapidly approaching when thinking in any shape would for some time be at an end for me.

That day, as the morning advanced, I went again, accompanied by Hannah, to the police court, and to the prison—a vast, ancient, in parts ruinous, and most gloomy pile of building. In those days the administration of justice was, if not more corrupt, certainly in its inferior departments by far more careless, than it is at present, and liable to thousands of interruptions and mal-practices, supporting themselves upon old traditionary usages which required at least half a century, and the shattering everywhere given to old systems by the French Revolution, together with the universal energy of mind applied to those subjects over the whole length and breadth of Christendom, to approach with any effectual reforms. Knowing this, and having myself had direct personal cognizance of various cases in which bribery had been applied with success, I was not without considerable hope that perhaps Hannah and myself might avail ourselves of this irregular passport through the gates of the prison; and, had the new regulation been of somewhat longer standing, there is little doubt that I should have been found right. Unfortunately, as yet it had all the freshness of new-born vigour, and kept itself in remembrance by the singular irritation it excited. Besides this, it was a pet novelty of one particular minister, new to the possession of power, anxious to distinguish himself, proud of his creative functions within the range of his office, and very sensitively jealous on the point of opposition to his mandates. Vain, therefore, on this day were all my efforts to corrupt the jailers; and, in fact, anticipating a time when I might have occasion to corrupt some of them for a more important purpose and on a larger scale, I did not think it prudent to proclaim my character beforehand as one who tampered with such means, and thus to arm against myself those jealousies in official people which it was so peculiarly important that I should keep asleep.

All that day, however, I lingered about the avenues and vast courts in the precincts of the prison, and near one particular wing of the building, which had been pointed out to me by a jailer as the section allotted to those who were in the situation of Agnes; that is, waiting their final commitment for trial. The

building generally he could indicate with certainty; but he professed himself unable to indicate the particular part of it which "the young woman brought in on the day previous" would be likely to occupy; consequently he could not point out the window from which her cell (her "*cell!*" what a word!) would be lighted. "But, master," he went on to say, "I would advise nobody to try that game." He looked with an air so significant, and at the same time used a gesture so indicative of private understanding, that I at once apprehended his meaning, and assured him that he had altogether misconstrued my drift; that, as to attempts at escape or at any mode of communicating with the prisoner from the outside, I trusted all *that* was perfectly needless; and that, at any rate, in my eyes it was perfectly hopeless. "Well, master," he replied, "that's neither here nor there. You've come down handsomely, that I *will* say; and, where a gentleman acts like a gentleman and behaves himself as such, I'm not the man to go and split upon him for a word. To be sure, it's quite nat'ral that a gentleman—put case that a young woman is his fancy woman—it's nothing but nat'ral that he should want to get her out of such an old rat hole as this, where many's the fine-timbered creature, both he and she, that has lain to rot, and has never got out of the old trap at all, first or last——" "How so?" I interrupted him; "surely they don't detain the corpses of prisoners?" "Ay; but mind you, put case that he or that she should die in this rat trap before sentence is passed, why then the prison counts them as its own children, and buries them in its own chapel—that old stack of pigeon holes that you see up yonder to the right hand." So then, after all, thought I, if my poor Agnes should, in her desolation and solitary confinement to these wretched walls, find her frail strength give way—should the moral horrors of her situation work their natural effect upon her health, and she should chance to die within this dungeon—here within this same dungeon will she lie to the resurrection; and in that case her prison doors have already closed upon her for ever. The man, who perhaps had some rough kindness in his nature, though tainted by the mercenary feelings too inevitably belonging to his situation, seemed to guess at the character of my ruminations by the change of my countenance; for he expressed some pity for my being "in so much trouble;" and it seemed to increase his respect for me that this trouble should be directed to the case of a woman; for he appeared to have a manly sense of the peculiar appeal made to the honour and gallantry of man by the mere

general fact of the feebleness and the dependence of woman. I looked at him more attentively in consequence of the feeling tone in which he now spoke, and was surprised that I had not more particularly noticed him before. He was a fine-looking, youngish man, with a bold, Robin Hood style of figure and appearance; and, morally speaking, he was absolutely transfigured to my eyes by the effect worked upon him for the moment through the simple calling up of his better nature. However, he recurred to his cautions about the peril in a legal sense of tampering with the windows, bolts, and bars of the old decaying prison; which, in fact, precisely according to the degree in which its absolute power over its prisoners was annually growing less and less, grew more and more jealous of its own reputation, and punished the attempts to break loose with the more severity, in exact proportion as they were the more tempting by the chances of success. I persisted in disowning any schemes of the sort, and especially upon the ground of their hopelessness. But this, on the other hand, was a ground that in his inner thoughts he treated with scorn; and I could easily see that, with a little skilful management of opportunity, I might, upon occasion, draw from him all the secrets he knew as to the special points of infirmity in this old ruinous building. For the present, and until it should certainly appear that there was some use to be derived from this species of knowledge, I forbore to raise superfluous suspicions by availing myself further of his communicative disposition. Taking, however, the precaution of securing his name, together with his particular office and designation in the prison, I parted from him as if to go home, but in fact to resume my sad roamings up and down the precincts of the jail.

What made these precincts much larger than otherwise they would have been was the circumstance that, by a usage derived from older days, both criminal prisoners and those who were prisoners for debt equally fell under the custody of this huge caravanserai for the indifferent reception of crime, of misdemeanour, and of misfortune. And those who came under the two first titles were lodged here through all stages of their connection with public justice; alike when mere objects of vague suspicion to the police, when under examination upon a specific charge, when fully committed for trial, when convicted and under sentence, awaiting the execution of that sentence, and, in a large proportion of cases, even through their final stage of punishment, when it happened to be of any nature compatible with indoor confinement. Hence it arose that the number of

those who haunted the prison gates, with or without a title to admission, was enormous; all the relatives, or more properly the acquaintances and connections, of the criminal population within the prison being swelled by all the families of needy debtors who came daily, either to offer the consolation of their society, or to diminish their common expenditure by uniting their slender establishments. One of the rules applied to the management of this vast multitude that were everyday candidates for admission was, that to save the endless trouble, as well as risk, perhaps, of opening and shutting the main gates to every successive arrival, periodic intervals were fixed for the admission by wholesale; and, as these periods came round every two hours, it would happen at many parts of the day that vast crowds accumulated, waiting for the next opening of the gate. These crowds were assembled in two or three large outer courts, in which also were many stalls and booths, kept there upon some local privilege of ancient inheritance, or upon some other plea made good by gifts or bribes—some by Jews, and others by Christians perhaps equally Jewish. Superadded to these stationary elements of this miscellaneous population were others, drawn thither by pure motives of curiosity, so that altogether an almost permanent mob was gathered together in these courts; and amid this mob it was—from I know not what definite motive, partly because I thought it probable that amongst these people I should hear the cause of Agnes peculiarly the subject of conversation—and so, in fact, it did really happen—but partly, and even more, I believe, because I now awfully began to shrink from solitude; tumult I must have, and distraction of thought—amid this mob, I say, it was that I passed two days. Feverish I had been from the first; and from bad to worse, in such a case, was, at any rate, a natural progress. But perhaps, also, amongst this crowd of the poor, the abjectly wretched, the ill fed, the desponding, and the dissolute, there might be very naturally a larger body of contagion lurking than according to their mere numerical expectations. There was at that season a very extensive depopulation going on in some quarters of this great metropolis and in other cities of the same empire by means of a very malignant typhus. This fever is supposed to be the peculiar product of jails; and, though it had not as yet been felt as a scourge and devastator of this particular jail, or at least the consequent mortality had been hitherto kept down to a moderate amount, yet it was highly probable that a certain quantity of contagion, much beyond the proportion of other popular

assemblages less uniformly wretched in their composition, was here to be found all day long; and doubtless my excited state and irritable habit of body had offered a peculiar predisposition that favoured the rapid development of this contagion. However this might be, the result was that, on the evening of the second day which I spent in haunting the purlieus of the prison (consequently the night preceding the second public examination of Agnes), I was attacked by ardent fever in such unmitigated fury that before morning I had lost all command of my intellectual faculties. For some weeks I became a pitiable maniac, and in every sense the wreck of my former self; and seven entire weeks, together with the better half of an eighth week, had passed over my head whilst I lay unconscious of time and its dreadful freight of events, excepting in so far as my disordered brain, by its fantastic coinages, created endless mimicries and mockeries of these events, less substantial, but oftentimes less afflicting or less agitating. It would have been well for me had my destiny decided that I was not to be recalled to this world of woe; but I had no such happiness in store. I recovered; and through twenty and eight years my groans have recorded the sorrow I feel that I did.

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I shall not rehearse, circumstantially and point by point, the sad unfolding, as it proceeded through successive revelations to me, of all which had happened during my state of physical incapacity. When I first became aware that my wandering senses had returned to me, and knew, by the cessation of all throbbings and the unutterable pains that had so long passed my brain, that I was now returning from the gates of death, a sad confusion assailed me as to some indefinite cloud of evil that had been hovering over me at the time when I first fell into a state of insensibility. For a time I struggled vainly to recover the lost connection of my thoughts, and I endeavoured ineffectually to address myself to sleep. I opened my eyes, but found the glare of light painful beyond measure. Strength, however, it seemed to me that I had, and more than enough, to raise myself out of bed. I made the attempt; but fell back, almost giddy with the effort. At the sound of the disturbance which I had thus made, a woman whom I did not know came from behind a curtain and spoke to me. Shrinking from any communication with a stranger, especially one whose discretion I could not estimate in making discoveries to me with the requisite caution, I asked her simply what o'clock it was.

"Eleven in the forenoon," she replied.

"And what day of the month?"

"The second," was her brief answer.

I felt almost a sense of shame in adding, "The second! But of what month?"

"Of June," was the startling rejoinder.

On the 8th of April I had fallen ill; and it was now actually the 2nd of June. O sickening calculation! revolting register of hours! for in that same moment which brought back this one recollection, perhaps by steadying my brain, rushed back in a torrent all the other dreadful remembrances of the period, and now the more so because, though the event was still uncertain as regarded my knowledge, it must have become dreadfully certain as regarded the facts of the case and the happiness of all who were concerned. Alas! one little circumstance too painfully assured me that this event had not been a happy one. Had Agnes been restored to her liberty and her home, where would she have been found but watching at my bedside? That too certainly I knew; and the inference was too bitter to support.

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On this same day, some hours afterwards, upon Hannah's return from the city, I received from her, and heard with perfect calmness, the whole sum of evil which awaited me. Little Francis—she took up her tale at that point—"was with God;" so she expressed herself. He had died of the same fever which had attacked me—had died and been buried nearly five weeks before. Too probably he had caught the infection from me. Almost—such are the caprices of human feeling—almost I could have rejoiced that this young memorial of my vanished happiness had vanished also. It gave me a pang, nevertheless, that the grave should thus have closed upon him before I had seen his fair little face again. But I steeled my heart to hear worse things than this. Next she went on to inform me that already, on the first or second day of our calamity, she had taken upon herself, without waiting for authority, on observing the rapid approaches of illness in me, and arguing the state of helplessness which would follow, to write off at once a summons in the most urgent terms to the brother of my wife. This gentleman, whom I shall call Pierpoint, was a high-spirited, generous young man as I have ever known. When I say that he was a sportsman, that at one season of the year he did little else than pursue his darling amusement of fox-hunting—for which, indeed, he had almost a maniacal passion—saying this, I shall already have

prejudged him in the opinions of many, who fancy all such persons the slaves of corporeal enjoyments. But, with submission, the truth lies the other way. According to my experience, people of these habits have their bodies more than usually under their command, as being subdued by severe exercise; and their minds, neither better nor worse on an average than those of their neighbours, are more available from being so much more rarely clogged by morbid habits in that uneasy yoke-fellow of the intellectual part—the body. He, at all events, was a man to justify in his own person this way of thinking; for he was a man not only of sound, but even of bold and energetic, intellect, and, in all moral respects, one whom any man might feel proud to call his friend. This young man, Pierpoint, without delay obeyed the summons; and, on being made acquainted with what had already passed, the first step he took was to call upon Barratt; and, without further question than what might ascertain his identity, he proceeded to inflict upon him a severe horsewhipping. A worse step on his sister's account he could not have taken. Previously to this the popular feeling had run strongly against Barratt; but now its unity was broken. A new element was introduced into the question. Democratic feelings were armed against this outrage; gentlemen and nobles, it was said, thought themselves not amenable to justice; and, again, the majesty of the law was offended at this intrusion upon an affair already under solemn course of adjudication. Everything, however, passes away under the healing hand of time; and this also faded from the public mind. People remembered also that he was a brother, and in that character, at any rate, had a right to some allowances for his intemperance; and what quickened the oblivion of the affair was—which in itself was sufficiently strange—that Barratt did not revive the case in the public mind by seeking legal reparation for his injuries. It was, however, still matter of regret that Pierpoint should have indulged himself in this movement of passion, since undoubtedly it broke and disturbed the else uniform stream of public indignation, by investing the original aggressor with something like the character of an injured person, and therefore with some set-off to plead against his own wantonness of malice. His malice might now assume the nobler aspect of revenge.

Thus far, in reporting the circumstances, Hannah had dallied, thus far I had rejoiced that she dallied, with the main burden of the woe; but now there remained nothing to dally with any longer; and she rushed along in her narrative, hurrying to tell

—I hurrying to hear. A second, a third, examination had ensued, then a final committal—all this within a week. By that time all the world was agitated with the case; literally not the city only, vast as that city was, but the nation, was convulsed, and divided into parties upon the question whether the prosecution were one of mere malice or not. The very government of the land was reported to be equally interested, and almost equally divided in opinion. In this state of public feeling came the trial. Image to yourself, O reader, whosoever you are, the intensity of the excitement which by that time had arisen in all people to be spectators of the scene; then image to yourself the effect of all this—a perfect consciousness that in herself, as a centre, was settled the whole mighty interest of the exhibition—that interest again of so dubious and mixed a character—sympathy in some with mere misfortune—sympathy in others with female frailty and guilt, not perhaps founded upon an absolute unwavering belief in her innocence, even amongst those who were most loud and positive as partisans in affirming it; and then remember that all this hideous scenical display and notoriety settled upon one whose very nature, constitutionally timid, recoiled with the triple agony of womanly shame, of matronly dignity, of insulted innocence, from every mode and shape of public display. Combine all these circumstances and elements of the case, and you may faintly enter into the situation of my poor Agnes. Perhaps the best way to express it at once is by recurring to the case of a young female Christian martyr, in the early ages of Christianity, exposed in the bloody amphitheatre of Rome or Verona to "fight with wild beasts," as it was expressed in mockery—she to fight! the lamb to fight with lions! But in reality the young martyr *had* a fight to maintain, and a fight (in contempt of that cruel mockery) fiercer than the fiercest of her persecutors could have faced, perhaps—the combat with the instincts of her own shrinking, trembling, fainting nature. Such a fight had my Agnes to maintain; and at that time there was a large party of gentlemen in whom the gentlemanly instinct was predominant, and who felt so powerfully the cruel indignities of her situation that they made a public appeal in her behalf. One thing, and a strong one, which they said, was this: "We all talk and move in this case as if, because the question appears doubtful to some people, and the accused party to some people wears a doubtful character, it would follow that she therefore had in reality a mixed character, composed in joint proportions of the best and the worst that is imputed to her. But let us not forget that

this mixed character belongs not to her, but to the infirmity of our human judgments. *They* are mixed; *they* are dubious; but she is not. She is, or she is not, guilty; there is no middle case. And let us consider for a single moment that, if this young lady (as many among us heartily believe) *is* innocent, then, and upon that supposition, let us consider how cruel we should all think the public exposure which aggravates the other injuries (as in that case they must be thought) to which her situation exposes her." They went on to make some suggestions for the officers of the court in preparing the arrangements for the trial, and some also for the guidance of the audience, which showed the same generous anxiety for sparing the feelings of the prisoner. If these did not wholly succeed in repressing the open avowal of coarse and brutal curiosity amongst the intensely vulgar, at least they availed to diffuse amongst the neutral and indifferent part of the public a sentiment of respect and forbearance which, emanating from high quarters, had a very extensive influence upon most of what met the eye or the ear of my poor wife. She, on the day of trial, was supported by her brother; and by that time she needed support indeed. I was reported to be dying; her little son was dead; neither had she been allowed to see him. Perhaps these things, by weaning her from all further care about life, might have found their natural effect in making her indifferent to the course of the trial or even to its issue. And so, perhaps, in the main, they did; but at times some lingering sense of outraged dignity, some fitful gleams of old sympathies, " the hectic of a moment," came back upon her, and prevailed over the deadening stupor of her grief. Then she shone for a moment into a starry light, sweet and woeful to remember. Then—— But why linger? I hurry to the close. She was pronounced guilty, whether by a jury or a bench of judges I do not say—having determined, from the beginning, to give no hint of the land in which all these events happened; neither is that of the slightest consequence. Guilty she was pronounced; but sentence at that time was deferred. Ask me not, I beseech you, about the muff or other circumstances inconsistent with the hostile evidence. These circumstances had the testimony, you will observe, of my own servants only; nay, as it turned out, of one servant exclusively; *that* naturally diminished their value. And, on the other side, evidence was arrayed, perjury was suborned, that would have wrecked a wilderness of simple truth trusting to its own unaided forces. What followed? Did this judgment of the court settle the opinion of the public? Opinion

of the public! Did it settle the winds? Did it settle the motion of the Atlantic? Wilder, fiercer, and louder grew the cry against the wretched accuser; mighty had been the power over the vast audience of the dignity, the affliction, the perfect simplicity, and the Madonna beauty of the prisoner. That beauty, so childlike, and at the same time so saintly, made, besides, so touching in its pathos by means of the abandonment, the careless abandonment, and the infinite desolation, of her air and manner, would of itself, and without further aid, have made many converts. Much more was done by the simplicity of her statements and the indifference with which she neglected to improve any strong points in her own favour—the indifference, as every heart perceived, of despairing grief. Then came the manners on the hostile side—the haggard consciousness of guilt, the drooping tone, the bravado and fierce strut which sought to dissemble all this. Not one amongst all the witnesses assembled on that side had (by all agreement) the bold, natural tone of conscious uprightness. Hence it could not be surprising that the storm of popular opinion made itself heard with a louder and a louder sound. The government itself began to be disturbed; the ministers of the sovereign were agitated; and, had no menaces been thrown out, it was generally understood that they would have given way to the popular voice, now continually more distinct and clamorous. In the midst of all this tumult obscure murmurs began to arise that Barratt had practised the same or similar villainies in former instances. One case in particular was beginning to be whispered about, which at once threw a light upon the whole affair. It was the case of a young and very beautiful married woman, who had been on the very brink of a catastrophe such as had befallen my own wife, when some seasonable interference, of what nature was not known, had critically delivered her. This case arose "like a little cloud no bigger than a man's hand," then spread and threatened to burst in tempest upon the public mind; when all at once, more suddenly even than it had arisen, it was hushed up, or in some way disappeared. But a trifling circumstance made it possible to trace this case; in after times, when means offered, but unfortunately no particular purpose of good, nor any purpose, in fact, beyond that of curiosity, it *was* traced; and enough was soon ascertained to have blown to fragments any possible conspiracy emanating from this Barratt, had that been of any further importance. However, in spite of all that money or art could effect, a sullen growl continued to be heard amongst the populace of villainies many and

profound that had been effected or attempted by this Barratt; and accordingly, much in the same way as was many years afterwards practised in London, when a hosier had caused several young people to be prosecuted to death for passing forged bank-notes, the wrath of the people showed itself in marking the shop for vengeance upon any favourable occasion offering through fire or riots, and in the meantime in deserting it. These things had been going on for some time when I awoke from my long delirium; but the effect they had produced upon a weak and obstinate and haughty government, or at least upon the weak and obstinate and haughty member of the government who presided in the police administration, was, to confirm and rivet the line of conduct which had been made the object of popular denunciation. More energetically, more scornfully, to express that determination of flying in the face of public opinion and censure, four days before my awakening, Agnes had been brought up to receive her sentence. On that same day (nay, it was said in that same hour), petitions, very numerously signed, and various petitions from different ranks, different ages, different sexes, were carried up to the throne, praying, upon manifold grounds, but all noticing the extreme doubtfulness of the case, for an unconditional pardon. By whose advice or influence it was guessed easily, though never exactly ascertained, these petitions were unanimously, almost contemptuously, rejected. And, to express the contempt of public opinion as powerfully as possible, Agnes was sentenced by the court, reassembled in full pomp, order, and ceremonial costume, to a punishment the severest that the laws allowed—viz., hard labour for ten years. The people raged more than ever; threats public and private were conveyed to the ears of the minister chiefly concerned in the responsibility, and who had indeed, by empty and ostentatious talking, assumed that responsibility to himself in a way that was perfectly needless.

Thus stood matters when I awoke to consciousness; and this was the fatal journal of the interval—interval so long, as measured by my fierce calendar of delirium—so brief, measured by the huge circuit of events which it embraced, and their mightiness for evil. Wrath, wrath immeasurable, unimaginable, unmitigable, burned at my heart like a cancer. The worst had come. And the thing that kills a man for action—the living in two climates at once—a torrid and a frigid zone of hope and fear—that was past. Weak, suppose I were for the moment; I felt that a day or two might bring back my strength.

No miserable tremors of hope *now* shook my nerves; if they shook from that inevitable rocking of the waters that follows a storm, so much might be pardoned to the infirmity of a nature that could not lay aside its fleshly necessities, nor altogether forgo its homage to "these frail elements," but which by inspiration already lived within a region where no voices were heard but the spiritual voices of transcendent passions—of

"Wrongs unrevenged and insults unredressed."

Six days from that time I was well—well and strong. I rose from bed; I bathed; I dressed—dressed as if I were a bridegroom. And that *was*, in fact, a great day in my life. I was to see Agnes. O yes! Permission had been obtained from the lordly minister that I should see my wife. Is it possible? Can such condescensions exist? Yes; solicitations from ladies, eloquent notes wet with ducal tears—these had won from the thrice-radiant secretary, redolent of roseate attar, a countersign to some order or other, by which I—yes, I—under licence of a fop and supervision of a jailer, was to see and for a time to converse with my own wife.

The hour appointed for the first day's interview was eight o'clock in the evening. On the outside of the jail all was summer light and animation. The sports of children in the streets of mighty cities are but sad, and too painfully recall the circumstances of freedom and breezy nature that are not there. But still the pomp of glorious summer, and the presence, "not to be put by," of the everlasting light, that is either always present or always dawning—these potent elements impregnate the very city life, and the dim reflex of Nature which is found at the bottom of well-like streets, with more solemn powers to move and to soothe in summer. I struck upon the prison gates—the first among multitudes waiting to strike. Not because we struck, but because the hour had sounded, suddenly the gate opened; and in we streamed. I, as a visitor for the first time, was immediately distinguished by the jailers, whose glance of the eye is fatally unerring. "Who was it that I wanted?" At the name, a stir of emotion was manifest even there; the dry bones stirred and moved; the passions outside had long ago passed to the interior of this gloomy prison; and not a man but had his hypothesis on the case; not a man but had almost fought with some comrade (many had literally fought) about the merits of their several opinions.

If any man had expected a scene at this reunion he would

have been disappointed. Exhaustion and the ravages of sorrow had left to dear Agnes so little power of animation or of action that her emotions were rather to be guessed at, both for kind and for degree, than directly to have been perceived. She was, in fact, a sick patient, far gone in an illness that should properly have confined her to bed, and was as much past the power of replying to my frenzied exclamations as a dying victim of fever of entering upon a strife of argument. In bed, however, she was not. When the door opened, she was discovered sitting at a table placed against the opposite wall, her head pillowed upon her arms, and these resting upon the table. Her beautiful long auburn hair had escaped from its confinement, and was floating over the table and her own person. She took no notice of the disturbance made by our entrance, did not turn, did not raise her head, nor make an effort to do so, nor by any sign whatever intimate that she was conscious of our presence until the turnkey in a respectful tone announced me. Upon that a low groan, or rather a feeble moan, showed that she had become aware of my presence, and relieved me from all apprehension of causing too sudden a shock by taking her in my arms. The turnkey had now retired: we were alone. I knelt by her side, threw my arms about her, and pressed her to my heart. She drooped her head upon my shoulder and lay for some time like one who slumbered; but, alas! not as she had used to slumber. Her breathing, which had been like that of sinless infancy, was now frightfully short and quick; she seemed not properly to breathe, but to gasp. This, thought I, may be sudden agitation, and in that case she will gradually recover; half an hour will restore her. Woe is me! She did *not* recover; and internally I said, She never *will* recover. The arrows have gone too deep for a frame so exquisite in its sensibility, and already her hours are numbered.

At this first visit I said nothing to her about the past; *that*, and the whole extent to which our communications should go, I left rather to her own choice. At the second visit, however, upon some word or other arising which furnished an occasion for touching on this hateful topic, I pressed her, contrary to my own previous intention, for as full an account of the fatal event as she could without a distressing effort communicate. To my surprise she was silent—gloomily, almost it might have seemed obstinately, silent. A horrid thought came into my mind. Could it, might it, have been possible that my noble-minded wife, such she had ever seemed to me, was open to temptations

of this nature? Could it have been that in some moment of infirmity, when her better angel was away from her side, she had yielded to a sudden impulse of frailty, such as a second moment for consideration would have resisted, but which unhappily had been followed by no such opportunity of retrieval? I had heard of such things. Cases there were in our own times (and not confined to one nation) when irregular impulses of this sort were known to have haunted and besieged natures not otherwise ignoble and base. I ran over some of the names amongst those which were taxed with this propensity. More than one were the names of people in a technical sense held noble. That nor any other consideration abated my horror. Better, I said, better (because more compatible with elevation of mind), better to have committed some bloody act — some murderous act. Dreadful was the panic I underwent. God pardon the wrong I did! And even now I pray to him—as though the past thing were a future thing and capable of change —that he would forbid her for ever to know what was the derogatory thought I had admitted. I sometimes think, by recollecting a momentary blush that suffused her marble countenance—I think, I fear, that she might have read what was fighting in my mind. Yet that would admit of another explanation. If she did read the very worst, meek saint! she suffered no complaint or sense of that injury to escape her. It might, however, be that perception, or it might be that fear, which roused her to an effort that otherwise had seemed too revolting to undertake. She now rehearsed the whole steps of the affair from first to last; but the only material addition which her narrative made to that which the trial itself had involved was the following:—On two separate occasions previous to the last and fatal one, when she had happened to walk unaccompanied by me in the city, the monster Barratt had met her in the street. He had probably—and this was, indeed, subsequently ascertained—at first, and for some time afterwards, mistaken her rank, and had addressed some proposals to her, which, from the suppressed tone of his speaking or from her own terror and surprise, she had not clearly understood; but enough had reached her alarmed ear to satisfy her that they were of a nature in the last degree licentious and insulting. Terrified and shocked rather than indignant—for she too easily presumed the man to be a maniac—she hurried homewards, and was rejoiced, on first venturing to look round when close to her own gate, to perceive that the man was not following. There,

however, she was mistaken; for, either on this occasion or on some other, he had traced her homewards. The last of these rencounters had occurred just three months before the fatal 6th of April; and, if in any one instance Agnes had departed from the strict line of her duty as a wife, or had shown a defect of judgment, it was at this point, in not having frankly and fully reported the circumstances to me. On the last of these occasions I had met her at the garden gate, and had particularly remarked that she seemed agitated; and now, at recalling these incidents, Agnes reminded me that I had noticed that circumstance to herself, and that she had answered me faithfully as to the main fact. It was true she had done so; for she had said that she had just met a lunatic, who had alarmed her by fixing his attention upon herself and speaking to her in a ruffian manner; and it was also true that she did sincerely regard him in that light. This led me at the time to construe the whole affair into a casual collision with some poor maniac escaping from his keepers, and of no future moment, having passed by without present consequences. But, had she, instead of thus reporting her own erroneous impression, reported the entire circumstances of the case, I should have given them a very different interpretation. Affection for me, and fear to throw me needlessly into a quarrel with a man of apparently brutal and violent nature—these considerations, as too often they do with the most upright wives, had operated to check Agnes in the perfect sincerity of her communications. She had told nothing *but* the truth—only, and fatally it turned out for us both, she had not told the *whole* truth. The very suppression to which she had reconciled herself, under the belief that thus she was providing for my safety and her own consequent happiness, had been the indirect occasion of ruin to both. It was impossible to show displeasure under such circumstances, or under any circumstances, to one whose self-reproaches were at any rate too bitter; but certainly, as a general rule, every conscientious woman should resolve to consider her husband's honour in the first case, and far before all other regards whatsoever; to make this the first, the second, the third law of her conduct, and his personal safety but the fourth or fifth. Yet women, and especially when the interests of children are at stake upon their husbands' safety, rarely indeed are able to take this Roman view of their duties.

To return to the narrative. Agnes had not, nor could have, the most remote suspicion of this Barratt's connection with the

shop which he had not accidentally entered; and the sudden appearance of this wretch it was, at the very moment of finding herself charged with so vile and degrading an offence, that contributed most of all to rob her of her natural firmness, by suddenly revealing to her terrified heart the depth of the conspiracy which thus yawned like a gulf below her. And not only had this sudden horror, upon discovering a guilty design in what before had seemed accident, and links uniting remote incidents which else seemed casual and disconnected, greatly disturbed and confused her manner—which confusion again had become more intense upon her own consciousness that she *was* confused and that her manner was greatly to her disadvantage—but—which was the worst effect of all, because the rest could not operate against her except upon those who were present to witness it, whereas this was noted down and recorded —so utterly did her confusion strip her of all presence of mind that she did not consciously notice (and consequently could not protest against at the moment when it was most important to do so and most natural) the important circumstance of the muff. This capital objection, therefore, though dwelt upon and improved to the utmost at the trial, was looked upon by the judges as an afterthought, and merely because it had not been seized upon by herself and urged in the first moments of her almost incapacitating terror on finding this amongst the circumstances of the charge against her. As if an ingenuous nature, in the very act of recoiling with horror from a criminal charge the most degrading, and in the very instant of discovering, with a perfect rapture of alarm, the too plausible appearance of probability amongst the circumstances, would be likely to pause, and, with attorney-like dexterity, to pick out the particular circumstance that might admit of being *proved* to be false, when the conscience proclaimed, though in despondence for the result, that all the circumstances were, as to the use made of them, one tissue of falsehoods! Agnes, who had made a powerful effort in speaking of the case at all, found her calmness increase as she advanced; and she now told me that in reality there were two discoveries which she made in the same instant, and not one only, which had disarmed her firmness and ordinary presence of mind. One I have mentioned —the fact of Barratt, the proprietor of the shop, being the same person who had in former instances persecuted her in the street. But the other was even more alarming. It has been said already that it was *not* a pure matter of accident that she had visited this

particular shop. In reality, that nursery maid of whom some mention has been made above, and in terms expressing the suspicion with which even then I regarded her, had persuaded her into going thither by some representations which Agnes had already ascertained to be altogether unwarranted. Other presumptions against this girl's fidelity crowded dimly upon my wife's mind at the very moment of finding her eyes thus suddenly opened; and it was not till five minutes after her first examination, and in fact five minutes after it had ceased to be of use to her, that she remembered another circumstance, which now, when combined with the sequel, told its own tale. The muff had been missed some little time before the 6th of April. Search had been made for it; but, the particular occasion which required it having passed off, this search was laid aside for the present, in the expectation that it would soon reappear in some corner of the house before it was wanted. Then came the sunny day, which made it no longer useful, and would perhaps have dismissed it entirely from the recollection of all parties, until it was now brought back in this memorable way. The name of my wife was embroidered within, upon the lining; and it thus became a serviceable link to the hellish cabal against her. Upon reviewing the circumstances from first to last, upon recalling the manner of the girl at the time when the muff was missed, and upon combining the whole with her recent deception, by which she had misled her poor mistress into visiting this shop, Agnes began to see the entire truth as to this servant's wicked collusion with Barratt, though perhaps it might be too much to suppose her aware of the unhappy result to which her collusion tended. All this she saw at a glance when it was too late; for her first examination was over. This girl, I must add, had left our house during my illness; and she had afterwards a melancholy end.

One thing surprised me in all this. Barratt's purpose must manifestly have been to create merely a terror in my poor wife's mind, and to stop short of any legal consequences, in order to profit of that panic and confusion for extorting compliances with his hideous pretensions. It perplexed me, therefore, that he did not appear to have pursued this, manifestly his primary, purpose, the other being merely a mask to conceal his true ends and also (as he fancied) a means for effecting them. In this, however, I had soon occasion to find that I was deceived. He had, but without the knowledge of Agnes, taken such steps as were then open to him for making overtures to her with regard

to the terms upon which he would agree to defeat the charge against her by failing to appear. But the law had travelled too fast for him and too determinately; so that, by the time he supposed terror to have operated sufficiently in favour of his views, it had already become unsafe to venture upon such explicit proposals as he would otherwise have tried. His own safety was now at stake, and would have been compromised by any open or written avowal of the motives on which he had been all along acting. In fact, at this time he was foiled by the agent in whom he confided; but much more he had been confounded upon another point—the prodigious interest manifested by the public. Thus it seems that, whilst he meditated only a snare for my poor Agnes, he had prepared one for himself, and finally, to evade the suspicions which began to arise powerfully as to his true motives, and thus to stave off his own ruin, had found himself in a manner obliged to go forward and consummate the ruin of another.

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The state of Agnes, as to health and bodily strength, was now becoming such that I was forcibly warned—whatsoever I meditated doing, to do quickly. There was this urgent reason for alarm: once conveyed into that region of the prison in which sentences like hers were executed, it became hopeless that I could communicate with her again. All intercourse whatsoever, and with whomsoever, was then placed under the most rigorous interdict; and the alarming circumstance was, that this transfer was governed by no settled rules, but might take place at any hour, and would certainly be precipitated by the slightest violence on my part, the slightest indiscretion, or the slightest argument for suspicion. Hard, indeed, was the part I had to play; for it was indispensable that I should appear calm and tranquil, in order to disarm suspicions around me, whilst continually contemplating the possibility that I myself might be summoned to extremities which I could not so much as trust myself to name or distinctly to conceive. But thus stood the case:—The government, it was understood, angered by the public opposition, resolute for the triumph of what they called "principle," had settled finally that the sentence should be carried into execution. Now, that she, that my Agnes, being the frail wreck that she had become, could have stood one week of this sentence practically and literally enforced, was a mere chimera. A few hours, probably, of the experiment would have settled that question by dismissing her to the death she longed

for; but, because the suffering would be short, was I to stand by and to witness the degradation, the pollution, attempted to be fastened upon her? What! to know that her beautiful tresses would be shorn ignominiously—a felon's dress forced upon her—a vile taskmaster, with authority to—— Blistered be the tongue that could go on to utter, in connection with her innocent name, the vile dishonours which were to settle upon her person! I, however, and her brother had taken such resolutions that this result was one barely possible; and yet I sickened (yes, literally I many times experienced the effect of physical sickness) at contemplating our own utter childish helplessness, and recollecting that every night during our seclusion from the prison the last irreversible step might be taken, and in the morning we might find a solitary cell, and the angel form that had illuminated it gone where we could not follow, and leaving behind her the certainty that we should see her no more. Every night, at the hour of locking up, *she*, at least, manifestly had a fear that she saw us for the last time. She put her arms feebly about my neck, sobbed convulsively, and, I believe, guessed—but, if really so, did not much reprove or quarrel with —the desperate purposes which I struggled with in regard to her own life. One thing was quite evident—that to the peace of her latter days, now hurrying to their close, it was indispensable that she should pass them undivided from me; and possibly, as was afterwards alleged, when it became easy to allege anything, some relenting did take place in high quarters at this time; for, upon some medical reports made just now, a most seasonable indulgence was granted, viz., that Hannah was permitted to attend her mistress constantly; and it was also felt as a great alleviation of the horrors belonging to this prison that candles were now allowed throughout the nights. But I was warned privately that these indulgences were with no consent from the police minister, and that circumstances might soon withdraw the momentary intercession by which we profited. With this knowledge, we could not linger in our preparations. We had resolved upon accomplishing an escape for Agnes, at whatever risk or price. The main difficulty was her own extreme feebleness, which might forbid her to co-operate with us in any degree at the critical moment; and the main danger was delay. We pushed forward, therefore, in our attempts with prodigious energy, and I, for my part, with an energy like that of insanity.

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The first attempt we made was upon the fidelity to his trust of the chief jailer. He was a coarse, vulgar man, brutal in his manners, but with vestiges of generosity in his character, though damaged a good deal by his daily associates. Him we invited to a meeting at a tavern in the neighbourhood of the prison, disguising our names as too certain to betray our objects, and baiting our invitation with some hints which we had ascertained were likely to prove temptations under his immediate circumstances. He had a graceless young son whom he was most anxious to wean from his dissolute connections, and to steady, by placing him in some office of no great responsibility. Upon this knowledge we framed the terms of our invitation.

These proved to be effectual as regarded our immediate object of obtaining an interview of persuasion. The night was wet; and at seven o'clock, the hour fixed for the interview, we were seated in readiness, much perplexed to know whether he would take any notice of our invitation. We had waited three-quarters of an hour, when we heard a heavy, lumbering step ascending the stair. The door was thrown open to its widest extent, and in the centre of the doorway stood a short, stout-built man, and the very broadest I ever beheld, staring at us with bold, inquiring eyes. His salutation was something to this effect:—

"What the hell do you gay fellows want with me? What the blazes is this humbugging letter about? My son, and be hanged! What do you know of my son?"

Upon this overture we ventured to request that he would come in and suffer us to shut the door, which we also locked. Next we produced the official paper nominating his son to a small place in the customs—not yielding much, it was true, in the way of salary, but fortunately, and in accordance with the known wishes of the father, unburdened with any dangerous trust.

"Well, I suppose I must say thank ye; but what comes next? What am I to do to pay the damages?" We informed him that for this particular little service we asked no return.

"No, no," said he; "that'll not go down; that cat'll not jump. I'm not green enough for that. So say away—what's the damage?" We then explained that we had certainly a favour, and a great one, to ask ("Ay, I'll be bound you have," was his parenthesis), but that for this we were prepared to offer a separate remuneration; repeating, that, with respect to the little place procured for his son, it had not cost us anything;

and therefore we did really and sincerely decline to receive anything in return, satisfied that by this little offering we had procured the opportunity of this present interview. At this point we withdrew a covering from the table, upon which we had previously arranged a heap of gold coins, amounting in value to twelve hundred English guineas—this being the entire sum which circumstances allowed us to raise on so sudden a warning; for some landed property that we both had was so settled and limited that we could not convert it into money, either by way of sale, loan, or mortgage. This sum, stating to him its exact amount, we offered to his acceptance, upon the single condition that he would look aside, or wink hard, or (in whatever way he chose to express it) would make, or suffer to be made, such facilities for our liberating a female prisoner as we would point out. He mused: full five minutes he sat deliberating without opening his lips. At length he shocked us by saying, in a firm, decisive tone, that left us little hope of altering his resolution, "No: gentlemen, it's a very fair offer, and a good deal of money for a single prisoner. I think I can guess at the person. It's a fair offer—fair enough; but, bless your heart! if I were to do the thing you want—why, perhaps another case might be overlooked. But this prisoner—no; there's too much depending. No; they would turn me out of my place. Now, the place is worth more to me in the long run than what you offer; though you bid fair enough, if it were only for my time in it. But look here: in case I can get my son to come into harness, I'm expecting to get the office for him after I've retired. So I can't do it. But I'll tell you what: you've been kind to my son; and therefore I'll not say a word about it. You're safe for me. And so good-night to you." Saying which, and standing no further question, he walked resolutely out of the room and downstairs.

Two days we mourned over this failure, and scarcely knew which way to turn for another ray of hope. On the third morning we received intelligence that this very jailer had been attacked by the fever, which, after long desolating the city, had at length made its way into the prison. In a very few days the jailer was lying without hope of recovery; and, of necessity, another person was appointed to fill his station for the present. This person I had seen, and I liked him less by much than the one he succeeded. He had an Italian appearance, and he wore an air of Italian subtlety and dissimulation. I was surprised to find, on proposing the same service to him, and on the same

terms, that he made no objection whatever, but closed instantly with my offers. In prudence, however, I had made this change in the articles: a sum equal to two hundred English guineas, or one-sixth part of the whole money, he was to receive beforehand as a retaining fee; but the remainder was to be paid only to himself, or to anybody of his appointing, at the very moment of our finding the prison gates thrown open to us. He spoke fairly enough, and seemed to meditate no treachery; nor was there any obvious or known interest to serve by treachery; and yet I doubted him grievously.

The night came. It was chosen as a gala night, one of two nights throughout the year in which the prisoners were allowed to celebrate a great national event; and, in those days of relaxed prison management, the utmost licence was allowed to the rejoicing. This indulgence was extended to prisoners of all classes, though, of course, under more restrictions with regard to the criminal class. Ten o'clock came—the hour at which we had been instructed to hold ourselves in readiness. We had been long prepared. Agnes had been dressed by Hannah in such a costume externally (a man's hat and cloak, etc.) that, from her height, she might easily have passed amongst a mob of masquerading figures in the debtors' halls and galleries for a young stripling. Pierpoint and myself were also to a certain degree disguised; so far, at least, that we should not have been recognised at any hurried glance by those of the prison officers who had become acquainted with our persons. We were all more or less disguised about the face; and in that age, when masks were commonly used at all hours by people of a certain rank, there would have been nothing suspicious in any possible costume of the kind in a night like this, if we could succeed in passing for friends of debtors.

I am impatient of these details; and I hasten over the ground. One entire hour passed away, and no jailer appeared. We began to despond heavily; and Agnes, poor thing! was now the most agitated of us all. At length eleven struck in the harsh tones of the prison clock. A few minutes after we heard the sound of bolts drawing and bars unfastening. The jailer entered—drunk, and much disposed to be insolent. I thought it advisable to give him another bribe, and he resumed the fawning insinuation of his manner. He now directed us, by passages which he pointed out, to gain the other side of the prison. There we were to mix with the debtors and their mob of friends, and to await his joining us, which in that crowd he could do

without much suspicion. He wished us to traverse the passages separately; but this was impossible, for it was necessary that one of us should support Agnes on each side. I previously persuaded her to take a small quantity of brandy, which we rejoiced to see had given her, at this moment of starting, a most seasonable strength and animation. The gloomy passages were more than usually empty; for all the turnkeys were employed in a vigilant custody of the gates and examination of the parties going out. So the jailer had told us; and the news alarmed us. We came at length to a turning which brought us in sight of a strong iron gate that divided the two main quarters of the prison. For this we had not been prepared. The man, however, opened the gate without a word spoken, only putting out his hand for a fee; and in my joy, perhaps, I gave him one imprudently large. After passing this gate, the distant uproar of the debtors guided us to the scene of their merriment; and, when there, such was the tumult and the vast multitude assembled, that we now hoped in good earnest to accomplish our purpose without accident. Just at this moment the jailer appeared in the distance: he seemed looking towards us; and at length one of our party could distinguish that he was beckoning to us. We went forward, and found him in some agitation, real or counterfeit. He muttered a word or two quite unintelligible about the man at the wicket; told us we must wait a while, and he would then see what could be done for us. We were beginning to demur and to express the suspicions which now too seriously arose, when he, seeing, or affecting to see, some object of alarm, pushed us with a hurried movement into a cell opening upon the part of the gallery at which we were now standing. Not knowing whether we really might not be retreating from some danger, we could do no otherwise than comply with his signals; but we were troubled at finding ourselves immediately locked in from the outside, and thus apparently all our motions had only sufficed to exchange one prison for another.

We were now completely in the dark, and found, by a hard breathing from one corner of the little dormitory, that it was not unoccupied. Having taken care to provide ourselves separately with means for striking a light, we soon had more than one torch burning. The brilliant light, falling upon the eyes of a man who lay stretched on the iron bedstead, woke him. It proved to be my friend the under jailer, Ratcliffe, but no longer holding any office in the prison. He sprang up, and a rapid explanation took place. He had become a prisoner for

debt; and on this evening, after having caroused through the day with some friends from the country, had retired at an early hour to sleep away his intoxication. I, on my part, thought it prudent to entrust him unreservedly with our situation and purposes, not omitting our gloomy suspicions. Ratcliffe looked, with a pity that won my love, upon the poor wasted Agnes. He had seen her on her first entrance into the prison, had spoken to her, and therefore knew *from* what she had fallen, *to* what. Even then he had felt for her; how much more at this time, when he beheld, by the fierce light of the torches, her woe-worn features!

"Who was it," he asked eagerly, "you made the bargain with? Manasseh?"

"The same."

"Then I can tell you this: not a greater villain walks the earth. He is a Jew from Portugal; he has betrayed many a man, and will many another, unless he gets his own neck stretched; which might happen, if I told all I know."

"But what was it probable that this man meditated? Or how could it profit him to betray us?"

"That's more than I can tell. He wants to get your money; and that he doesn't know how to bring about without doing his part. But that's what he never *will* do, take my word for it. That would cut him out of all chance for the head jailer's place." He mused a little, and then told us that he could himself put us outside the prison walls, and *would* do it without fee or reward. "But we must be quiet, or that devil will bethink him of me. I'll wager something he thought that I was out merrymaking like the rest; and, if he should chance to light upon the truth, he'll be back in no time." Ratcliffe then removed an old fire grate, at the back of which was an iron plate, that swung round into a similar fireplace in the contiguous cell. From that, by a removal of a few slight obstacles, we passed, by a long avenue, into the chapel. Then he left us, whilst he went out alone to reconnoitre his ground. Agnes was now in so pitiable a condition of weakness, as we stood on the very brink of our final effort, that we placed her in a pew, where she could rest as upon a sofa. Previously we had stood upon graves, and with monuments more or less conspicuous all around us—some raised by friends to the memory of friends, some by subscriptions in the prison, some by children who had risen into prosperity to the memory of a father, brother, or other relative who had died in captivity. I was grieved that these sad memorials should meet the eye of my wife at this moment of

awe and terrific anxiety. Pierpoint and I were well armed, and all of us determined not to suffer a recapture, now that we were free of the crowds that made resistance hopeless. This Agnes easily perceived; and *that*, by suggesting a bloody arbitration, did not lessen her agitation. I hoped therefore that, by placing her in the pew, I might at least liberate her for the moment from the besetting memorials of sorrow and calamity. But, as if in the very teeth of my purpose, one of the large columns which supported the roof of the chapel had its basis and lower part of the shaft in this very pew. On the side of it, and just facing her as she lay reclining on the cushions, appeared a mural tablet, with a bas-relief in white marble, to the memory of two children, twins, who had lived and died at the same time, and in this prison—children who had never breathed another air than that of captivity, their parents having passed many years within these walls under confinement for debt. The sculptures were not remarkable, being a trite, but not the less affecting, representation of angels descending to receive the infants; but the hallowed words of the inscription, distinct and legible—"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God"—met her eye, and, by the thoughts they awakened, made me fear that she would become unequal to the exertions which yet awaited her. At this moment Ratcliffe returned and informed us that all was right, and that, from the ruinous state of all the buildings which surrounded the chapel, no difficulty remained for us, who were, in fact, beyond the strong part of the prison, excepting at a single door, which we should be obliged to break down. But had we any means arranged for pursuing our flight, and turning this escape into account, when out of confinement? All that, I assured him, was provided for long ago. We proceeded, and soon reached the door. We had one crowbar amongst us, but beyond that had no better weapons than the loose stones found about some new-made graves in the chapel. Ratcliffe and Pierpoint, both powerful men, applied themselves by turns to the door, whilst Hannah and I supported Agnes. The door did not yield, being of enormous strength; but the wall did, and a large mass of stonework fell outwards, twisting the door aside; so that, by afterwards working with our hands, we removed stones many enough to admit of our egress. Unfortunately this aperture was high above the ground, and it was necessary to climb over a huge heap of loose rubbish in order to profit by it. My brother-in-law passed first, in order to

receive my wife, quite helpless at surmounting the obstacle by her own efforts, out of my arms. He had gone through the opening, and, turning round so as to face me, he naturally could see something that I did *not* see. "Look behind!" he called out rapidly. I did so, and saw the murderous villain Manasseh, with his arm uplifted, and in the act of cutting at my wife, nearly insensible as she was, with a cutlass. The blow was not for me, but for her, as the fugitive prisoner; and the law would have borne him out in the act. I saw, I comprehended, the whole. I groped, as far as I could without letting my wife drop, for my pistols; but all that I could do would have been unavailing and too late—she would have been murdered in my arms. But—and that was what none of us saw, neither I, nor Pierpoint, nor the hound Manasseh—one person stood back in the shade; one person had seen, but had not uttered a word on seeing, Manasseh advancing through the shades; one person only had forecast the exact succession of all that was coming. Me she saw embarrassed and my hands preoccupied, Pierpoint and Ratcliffe useless by position, and the gleam of the dog's eye directed her to his aim. The crowbar was leaning against the shattered wall. This she had silently seized. One blow knocked up the sword; a second laid the villain prostrate. At this moment appeared another of the turnkeys advancing from the rear; for the noise of our assault upon the door had drawn attention in the interior of the prison, from which, however, no great number of assistants could on this dangerous night venture to absent themselves. What followed for the next few minutes hurried onwards, incident crowding upon incident, like the motions of a dream. Manasseh, lying on the ground, yelled out, "The bell! the bell!" to him who followed. The man understood, and made for the belfry door attached to the chapel; upon which Pierpoint drew a pistol, and sent the bullet whizzing past his ear so truly that fear made the man obedient to the counter-orders of Pierpoint for the moment. He paused and awaited the issue. In a moment all had cleared the wall, traversed the waste ground beyond it, lifted Agnes over the low railing, shaken hands with our benefactor Ratcliffe, and pushed onwards as rapidly as we were able to the little dark lane, a quarter of a mile distant, where had stood waiting for the last two hours a chaise-and-four.

[Ratcliffe, before my story closes, I will pursue to the last of my acquaintance with him, according to the just claims of his services. He had privately whispered to me, as we went along,

that he could speak to the innocence of that lady, pointing to my wife, better than anybody. He was the person whom (as then holding an office in the prison) Barratt had attempted to employ as agent in conveying any messages that he found it safe to send—obscurely hinting the terms on which he would desist from prosecution. Ratcliffe had at first undertaken the negotiation from mere levity of character; but, when the story and the public interest spread, and after himself becoming deeply struck by the prisoner's affliction, beauty, and reputed innocence, he had pursued it only as a means of entrapping Barratt into such written communications and such private confessions of the truth as might have served Agnes effectually. He wanted the art, however, to disguise his purposes. Barratt came to suspect him violently, and feared his evidence so far, even for those imperfect and merely oral overtures which he had really sent through Ratcliffe, that, on the very day of the trial, he, as was believed, though by another nominally, contrived that Ratcliffe should be arrested for debt, and, after harassing him with intricate forms of business, had finally caused him to be conveyed to prison. Ratcliffe was thus involved in his own troubles at the time, and afterwards supposed that, without written documents to support his evidence, he could not be of much service to the re-establishment of my wife's reputation. Six months after his services in the night escape from the prison I saw him, and pressed him to take the money so justly forfeited to him by Manasseh's perfidy. He would, however, be persuaded to take no more than paid his debts. A second and a third time his debts were paid by myself and Pierpoint. But the same habits of intemperance and dissolute pleasure which led him into these debts finally ruined his constitution; and he died, though otherwise of a fine, generous, manly nature, a martyr to dissipation, at the early age of twenty-nine. With respect to his prison confinement, it was so frequently recurring in his life, and was alleviated by so many indulgences, that he scarcely viewed it as a hardship. Having once been an officer of the prison, and having thus formed connections with the whole official establishment, and done services to many of them, and being of so convivial a turn, he was, even as a prisoner, treated with distinction, and considered as a privileged son of the house.]

It was just striking twelve o'clock as we entered the lane where the carriage was drawn up. Rain, about the profoundest I had ever witnessed, was falling. Though near to midsummer, the night had been unusually dark to begin with, and, from the

increasing rain, had become much more so. We could see nothing; and at first we feared that some mistake had occurred as to the station of the carriage—in which case we might have sought for it vainly through the intricate labyrinth of the streets in that quarter. I first descried it by the light of a torch, reflected powerfully from the large eyes of the leaders. All was ready; horse-keepers were at the horses' heads; the postilions were mounted; each door had the steps let down; Agnes was lifted in; Hannah and I followed; Pierpoint mounted his horse; and at the word—O, how strange a word!—"*All's right!*" the horses sprang off like leopards, a manner ill suited to the slippery pavement of a narrow street. At that moment, but we valued it little indeed, we heard the prison bell ringing out loud and clear. Thrice within the first three minutes we had to pull up suddenly, on the brink of formidable accidents, from the dangerous speed we maintained, and which, nevertheless, the driver had orders to maintain, as essential to our plan. All the stoppages and hindrances of every kind along the road had been anticipated previously, and met by contrivance of one kind or other; and Pierpoint was constantly a little ahead of us, to attend to anything that had been neglected. The consequence of these arrangements was that no person along the road could possibly have assisted to trace us by anything in our appearance; for we passed all objects at too flying a pace, and through darkness too profound, to allow of any one feature in our equipage being distinctly noticed. Ten miles out of town, a space which we traversed in forty-four minutes, a second relay of horses was ready; but we carried on the same postilions throughout. Six miles ahead of this distance we had a second relay; and with this set of horses, after pushing two miles farther along the road, we crossed by a miserable lane five miles long, scarcely even a bridge road, into another of the great roads from the capital; and, by thus crossing the country, we came back upon the city at a point far distant from that at which we left it. We had performed a distance of forty-two miles in three hours, and lost a fourth hour upon the wretched five miles of cross road. It was, therefore, four o'clock, and broad daylight, when we drew near the suburbs of the city. But a most happy accident now favoured us: a fog the most intense now prevailed: nobody could see an object six feet distant. We alighted in an uninhabited new-built street, plunged into the fog, thus confounding our traces to an observer. We then stepped into a hackney coach which had been stationed at

a little distance. Thence, according to our plan, we drove to a miserable quarter of the town, whither the poor only and the wretched resorted, mounted a gloomy, dirty staircase, and, befriended by the fog, still growing thicker and thicker, and by the early hour of the morning, reached a house previously hired, which, if shocking to the eye and the imagination from its squalid appearance and its gloom, still was a home, a sanctuary, an asylum from treachery, from captivity, from persecution. Here Pierpoint for the present quitted us; and once more Agnes, Hannah, and I, the shattered members of a shattered family, were thus gathered together in a house of our own.

Yes; once again, daughter of the hills, thou sleptest as heretofore in my encircling arms; but not again in that peace which crowned thy innocence in those days, and should have crowned it now. Through the whole of our flying journey, in some circumstances at its outset strikingly recalling to me that blessed one which followed our marriage, Agnes slept away, unconscious of our movements. She slept through all that day and the following night; and I watched over her with as much jealousy of all that might disturb her as a mother watches over her newborn baby; for I hoped, I fancied, that a long, long rest, a rest, a halcyon calm, a deep, deep Sabbath of security, might prove healing and medicinal. I thought wrong: her breathing became more disturbed, and sleep was now haunted by dreams; all of us, indeed, were agitated by dreams. The past pursued me, and the present, for high rewards had been advertised by government to those who traced us; and, though for the moment we were secure, because we never went abroad, and could not have been naturally sought in such a neighbourhood, still that very circumstance would eventually operate against us. At length every night I dreamed of our insecurity under a thousand forms; but more often by far my dreams turned upon our wrongs; wrath moved me rather than fear. Every night, for the greater part, I lay painfully and elaborately involved, by deep sense of wrong—

> "—— in long orations, which I pleaded
> Before unjust tribunals." [1]

And, for poor Agnes, her also did the remembrance of mighty wrongs occupy through vast worlds of sleep in the same way, though coloured by that tenderness which belonged to her gentler nature. One dream in particular—a dream of sublime circumstances—she repeated to me so movingly, with a pathos

[1] From a manuscript poem of a great living poet. (Note of 1838.)

so thrilling, that by some profound sympathy it transplanted itself to my own sleep, settled itself there, and is to this hour a part of the fixed dream scenery which revolves at intervals through my sleeping life. This it was: She would hear a trumpet sound—though perhaps as having been the prelude to the solemn entry of the judges at a town which she had once visited in her childhood; other preparations would follow; and at last all the solemnities of a great trial would shape themselves and fall into settled images. The audience was assembled, the judges were arrayed, the court was set. The prisoner was cited. Inquest was made, witnesses were called; and false witnesses came tumultuously to the bar. Then again a trumpet was heard, but the trumpet of a mighty archangel; and then would roll away thick clouds and vapours. Again the audience, but another audience, was assembled; again the tribunal was established; again the court was set; but a tribunal and a court how different to her! *That* had been composed of men seeking indeed for truth, but themselves erring and fallible creatures; the witnesses had been full of lies, the judges of darkness. But here was a court composed of heavenly witnesses —here was a righteous tribunal; and then, at last, a judge that could not be deceived. The judge smote with his eye a person who sought to hide himself in the crowd; the guilty man stepped forward; the poor prisoner was called up to the presence of the mighty judge. Suddenly the voice of a little child was heard ascending before her. Then the trumpet sounded once again; and then there were new heavens and a new earth; and her tears and her agitation (for she had seen her little Francis) awoke the poor palpitating dreamer.

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Two months passed on: nothing could possibly be done materially to raise the standard of those wretched accommodations which the house offered. The dilapidated walls, the mouldering plaster, the blackened mantelpieces, the stained and polluted wainscots—what could be attempted to hide or to repair all this by those who durst not venture abroad? Yet, whatever could be done, Hannah did; and, in the meantime, very soon indeed my Agnes ceased to see or to be offended by these objects. First of all her sight went from her; and nothing which appealed to that sense could ever more offend her. It is to me the one only consolation I have, that my presence and that of Hannah, with such innocent frauds as we concerted together, made her latter days pass in a heavenly calm, by

persuading her that our security was absolute, and that all search after us had ceased, under a belief on the part of government that we had gained the shelter of a foreign land. All this was a delusion; but it was a delusion, blessed be Heaven! which lasted exactly as long as her life, and was just commensurate with its necessity. I hurry over the final circumstances.

There was fortunately now, even for me, no fear that the hand of any policeman or emissary of justice could effectually disturb the latter days of my wife; for, besides pistols always lying loaded in an inner room, there happened to be a long, narrow passage on entering the house, which, by means of a blunderbuss, I could have swept effectually and cleared many times over; and I knew what to do in a last extremity. Just two months it was, to a day, since we had entered the house; and it happened that the medical attendant upon Agnes, who awakened no suspicion by his visits, had prescribed some opiate or anodyne which had not come. Being dark early, for it was now September, I had ventured out to fetch it. In this I conceived there could be no danger. On my return, I saw a man examining the fastenings of the door. He made no opposition to my entrance, nor seemed much to observe it; but I was disturbed. Two hours after, both Hannah and I heard a noise about the door and voices in low conversation. It is remarkable that Agnes heard this also, so quick had grown her hearing. She was agitated, but was easily calmed; and at ten o'clock we were all in bed. The hand of Agnes was in mine—so only she felt herself in security. She had been restless for an hour, and talking at intervals in sleep. Once she certainly wakened; for she pressed her lips to mine. Two minutes after I heard something in her breathing which did not please me. I rose hastily—brought a light—raised her head. Two long, long, gentle sighs, that scarcely moved the lips, were all that could be perceived. At that moment, at that very moment, Hannah called out to me that the door was surrounded. "Open it!" I said. Six men entered. Agnes it was they sought. I pointed to the bed. They advanced, gazed, and walked away in silence.

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After this I wandered about, caring little for life or its affairs, and roused only at times to think of vengeance upon all who had contributed to lay waste my happiness. In this pursuit, however, I was confounded as much by my own thoughts as by the difficulties of accomplishing my purpose. To assault and murder either of the two principal agents in this tragedy—what

would it be, what other effect could it have, than to invest them with the character of injured and suffering people, and thus to attract a pity or a forgiveness at least to their persons which never otherwise could have illustrated their deaths? I remembered, indeed, the words of a sea captain who had taken such vengeance as had offered at the moment upon his bitter enemy and persecutor (a young passenger on board his ship), who had informed against him at the custom house on his arrival in port, and had thus effected the confiscation of his ship and the ruin of the captain's family. The vengeance—and it was all that circumstances allowed—consisted in coming behind the young man clandestinely and pushing him into the deep waters of the dock, when, being unable to swim, he perished by drowning. "And the like," said the captain, when musing on his trivial vengeance—"and the like happens to many an honest sailor." Yes, thought I, the captain was right. The momentary shock of a pistol bullet—what is it? Perhaps it may save the wretch, after all, from the pangs of some lingering disease; and then, again, I shall have the character of a murderer, if known to have shot him. He will with many people have no such character, but, at worst, the character of a man too harsh (they will say), and possibly mistaken in protecting his property. And then, if not known as the man who shot him, where is the shadow even of vengeance? Strange it seemed to me, and passing strange, that I should be the person to urge arguments in behalf of letting this man escape; for at one time I had as certainly, as inexorably, doomed him as ever I took any resolution in my life. But the fact is, and I began to see it upon closer view, it is not easy by any means to take an adequate vengeance for any injury beyond a very trivial standard; and that, with common magnanimity, one does not care to avenge. Whilst I was in this mood of mind, still debating with myself whether I should or should not contaminate my hands with the blood of this monster, and still unable to shut my eyes upon one fact—viz. that my buried Agnes would above all things have urged me to abstain from such acts of violence, too evidently useless—listlessly, and scarcely knowing what I was in quest of, I strayed by accident into a church, where a venerable old man was preaching at the very moment I entered. He was either delivering as a text, or repeating in the course of his sermon, these words: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." By some accident, also, he fixed his eyes upon me at the moment; and this concurrence with the subject then occupying my thoughts so

much impressed me that I determined very seriously to review my half-formed purposes of revenge. And well it was that I did so; for in that same week an explosion of popular fury brought the life of this wretched Barratt to a shocking termination, pretty much resembling the fate of the De Witts in Holland; and the consequences to me were such, and so full of all the consolation and indemnification which this world could give me, that I have often shuddered since then at the narrow escape I had had from myself intercepting this remarkable retribution. The villain had again been attempting to play off the same hellish scheme with a beautiful young rustic which had succeeded in the case of my ill-fated Agnes; but the young woman in this instance had a high, and in fact termagant, spirit. Rustic as she was, she had been warned of the character of the man; everybody, in fact, was familiar with the recent tragedy. Either her lover or her brother happened to be waiting for her outside the window. He saw, in part, the very tricks in the act of perpetration by which some article or other, meant to be claimed as stolen property, was conveyed into a parcel she had incautiously laid down. He heard the charge against her made by Barratt and seconded by his creatures, heard her appeal, sprang to her aid, dragged the ruffian into the street, when, in less time than the tale could be told, and before the police (though tolerably alert) could effectually interpose for his rescue, the mob had so used or so abused the opportunity they had long wished for that he remained the mere disfigured wreck of what had once been a man, rather than a creature with any resemblance to humanity. I myself heard the uproar at a distance and the shouts and yells of savage exultation: they were sounds I shall never forget, though I did not at that time know them for what they were or understand their meaning. The result, however, to me was something beyond this, and worthy to have been purchased with my heart's blood. Barratt still breathed; spite of his mutilations, he could speak; he was rational. One only thing he demanded—it was that his dying confession might be taken. Two magistrates and a clergyman attended. He gave a list of those whom he had trepanned, and had failed to trepan, by his artifices and threats, into the sacrifice of their honour. He expired before the record was closed, but not before he had placed my wife's name in the latter list as the one whose injuries in his dying moments most appalled him. This confession on the following day went into the hands of the hostile minister; and my revenge was perfect.

THE KING OF HAYTI

FROM THE GERMAN[1]

Chapter I

Six weeks after his death stood the bust of the late stamp-distributor Goodchild exposed to public view in the china-manufactory of L——. For what purpose? Simply for this —that he might call heaven and earth to witness that, allowing for some little difference in the colours, he looked just as he did heretofore in life: a proposition which his brother and heir, Mr. Goodchild the merchant, flatly denied. For this denial Mr. Goodchild had his private reasons. "It is true," said he, "my late brother, the stamp-distributor, God rest him! did certainly bespeak three dozen copies of his own bust at the china-works; but surely he bespoke them for his use in this life, and not in the next. His intention, doubtless, was to send a copy to each of those loose companions of his who helped him to run through his fine estate: natural enough for him to propose as a spendthrift, but highly absurd for me to ratify as executor to so beggarly an inheritance; and therefore assuredly I shall not throw so much money out of the windows."

This was plausible talking to all persons who did not happen to know that the inheritance amounted to twenty-five thousand dollars, and that the merchant Goodchild, as was unanimously affirmed by all the Jews, both Christian and Jewish, in L——, weighed, moreover, in his own person, independently of that inheritance, one entire ton of gold.

Chapter II

The Ostensible Reason

The china-works would certainly never have been put off with this allegation; and therefore, by the advice of his attorney, he had in reserve a more special argument why he ought not to pay for the six-and-thirty busts. "My brother,"

[1] *London Magazine* for November 1823.

said he, "may have ordered so many copies of his bust. It is possible. I neither affirm nor deny. Busts may be ordered, and my brother may have ordered them. But what then? I suppose all men will grant that he meant the busts to have some resemblance to himself, and by no means to have no resemblance. But now, be it known, they have no resemblance to him. *Ergo*, I refuse to take them. One word's as good as a thousand."

Chapter III

"In the second place"—Dinner is on the Table

But this one word, no, nor a thousand such, would satisfy Mr. Whelp, the proprietor of the china-works; so he summoned Mr. Goodchild before the magistracy. Unfortunately, Mr. Whelp's lawyer, in order to show his ingenuity, had filled sixteen folio pages with an introductory argument, in which he laboured to prove that the art of catching a likeness was an especial gift of God, bestowed on very few portrait-painters and sculptors—and which, therefore, it was almost impious and profane to demand of a mere uninspired baker of porcelain. From this argument he went on to infer *a fortiori*, in the second place, that where the china-baker *did* hit the likeness, and had done so much more than could lawfully be asked of him, it was an injustice that would cry aloud to heaven for redress, if, after all, his works were returned upon his hands; especially where, as in the present instance, so much beauty of art was united with the peculiar merit of a portrait. It was fatal, however, to the effect of this argument that, just as the magistrate arrived at—"*In the second place*,"—his servant came in and said, "If you please, sir, dinner is on the table." Naturally, therefore, conceiving that the *gite* of the lawyer's reasoning was to defend the want of resemblance as an admitted fact, which it would be useless to deny, the worthy magistrate closed the pleadings, and gave sentence against Mr. Whelp, the plaintiff.

Chapter IV

The Professional Verdict

Mr. Whelp was confounded at this decree; and, as the readiest means of obtaining a revision of it, he sent in to the next sitting

of the bench a copy of the bust, which had previously been omitted. As bad luck would have it, however, there happened on this occasion to be present an artist who had a rancorous enmity both to Mr. Whelp and to the modeller of the bust. This person, being asked his opinion, declared without scruple that the bust was as wretched a portrait as it was lamentable in its pretensions as a work of art, and that his youngest pupil would not have had the audacity to produce so infamous a performance, unless he had an express wish to be turned neck and heels out of his house.

Upon this award of the conscientious artist—out of regard to his professional judgment—the magistracy thought fit to impose silence upon their own senses, which returned a very opposite award: and thus it happened that the former decision was affirmed. Now, certainly, Mr. Whelp had his remedy: he might appeal from the magistrate's sentence. But this he declined. "No, no," said he, "I know what I'm about: I shall want the magistrate once more; and I mustn't offend him. I will appeal to public opinion: *that* shall decide between me and the old rogue of a merchant."

And precisely in this way it was brought about that the late stamp-distributor Goodchild came to stand exposed to the public view in the centre window of the china-manufactory.

Chapter V

The Sinecurist

At the corner of this china-manufactory a beggar had his daily station; which, except for his youth, which was now and then thrown in his teeth, was indeed a right pleasant sinecure. To this man Mr. Whelp promised a handsome present if he would repeat to him in the evening what the passers-by had said of the bust in the day-time. Accordingly at night the beggar brought him the true and comfortable intelligence that young and old had unanimously pronounced the bust a most admirable likeness of the late stamp-distributor Goodchild. This report was regularly brought for eight days: on the eighth Mr. Whelp was satisfied, and paid off his commissioner, the beggar.

The next morning Mr. Whelp presented himself at Mr. Goodchild's to report the public approbation of his brother's bust.

Chapter VI

The Young Visionary

But here there was sad commotion. Mr. Goodchild was ill: and his illness arose from a little history, which must here be introduced by way of episode. Mr. Goodchild had an only daughter, named Ida. Now Miss Ida had begun, like other young ladies of her age, to think of marriage: nature had put it into her head to consider all at once that she was seventeen years of age. And it sometimes occurred to her that Mr. Tempest, the young barrister, who occupied the first floor over the way, was just the very man she would like in the character of lover. Thoughts of the same tendency appeared to have occurred also to Mr. Tempest. Ida seemed to him remarkably well fitted to play the part of a wife; and, when he pretended to be reading the pandects at his window, too often (it must be acknowledged) his eyes were settled all the while upon Ida's blooming face. The glances of these eyes did certainly cause some derangement occasionally in Ida's sewing and netting. What if they did? Let her drop as many stitches as she would, the next day was long enough to take them up again.

This young man, then, was clearly pointed out by Providence as the partner of her future life. Ah! that her father would think so too! But he called him always the young visionary. And, whenever she took a critical review of all their opposite neighbours, and fell as if by accident upon the domestic habits, respectable practice, and other favourable points about Mr. Tempest, her father never failed to close the conversation by saying—"Ay, but he's a mere young visionary." And, why, Mr. Goodchild? Simply for these two reasons: first, because once, at a party where they had met, Mr. Tempest had happened to say a few words very displeasing to his prejudices on the "golden age" of German poetry, to which Mr. Goodchild was much attached, and on which he could bear no opposition. Secondly, and chiefly, because, at the same time, he had unfortunately talked of the King of Hayti as a true crowned head—a monarch whom Mr. Goodchild was determined never to acknowledge.

Chapter VII

At last, Ida and Mr. Tempest had come to form a regular correspondence together in the following way:—The young

advocate had conducted a commerce of looks with the lovely girl for a long time; and, hardly knowing how it began, he had satisfied himself that she looked like an angel; and he grew very anxious to know whether she also talked like one? To ascertain this point, he followed her many a time, and up and down many a street; and he bore patiently, for her sake, all the angry looks of his clients, which seemed to say that he would do more wisely to stay at home and study their causes than to roam about in chase of a pretty girl. Mr. Tempest differed from his clients on this matter: suits at law, said he, have learned to wait; they are used to it; but hearts have not learned to wait, and never will be used to it. However, all was in vain. Ida was attended constantly either by her father or by an old governess; and in either case his scheme was knocked on the head.

At length, chance did for him more than he could ever do for himself, and placed him one night at her elbow in the theatre. True it was that her father, whose dislike to him ever since his fatal acknowledgment of the King of Hayti he had not failed to remark, sate on the other side of her; but the devil is in it, thought he, if I cannot steal a march on him the whole night through. As the overture to his scheme, therefore, he asked, in the most respectful manner, for the play-bill which Ida held in her hand. On returning it, he said—what a pity that the vanity of the manager should disturb so many excellent parts; the part allotted to himself would have been far better played by several others in the company.

Mr. Tempest was not much delighted on observing that Mr. Goodchild did not receive this remark very propitiously, but looked still gloomier than before. The fact was that the manager constantly attended all Mr. Goodchild's literary parties, professed great deference for his opinions, and was in return pronounced by Mr. Goodchild a man of "exceedingly good taste and accurate judgment." His first shot, Mr. Tempest saw clearly, had missed fire; and he would have been very glad to have had it back again; for he was thrown into a hideous fright when he saw the deep darkness which was gathering on Mr. Goodchild's face. Meantime, it was some little support to him under his panic—that, in returning the play-bill to Ida, he had ventured to press her hand, and fancied (but it could only be fancy) that she slightly returned the pressure. His enemy, whose thunder now began to break, insisted on giving an importance to his remark which the unfortunate young man

himself had never contemplated—having meant it only as an introduction to further conversation, and not at all valuing himself upon it. "A pity, my good sir," said Mr. Goodchild. "Why so, my good sir? On the contrary, my good sir, on the contrary, I believe it is pretty generally admitted that there is no part whatsoever in which this manager fails to outshine all competitors."

"Very true, sir; as you observe, sir, he outshines all his competitors; and, in fact, that was just the very remark I wished to make."

"It was, was it? Well, then, upon my word, my good sir, you took a very odd way to express it. The fact is, young and visionary people of this day are very rash in their judgments. But it is not to be supposed that so admirable a performer as this can be at all injured by such light and capricious opinions."

Mr. Tempest was confounded by this utter discomfiture of his inaugural effort, and sank dejected into silence. But his victorious foe looked abroad in all directions with a smiling and triumphant expression on his face, as if asking whether anybody had witnessed the ability with which he had taken down the conceit of the young rattlebrain.

However, Mr. Tempest was not so utterly dejected but he consoled himself with thinking that every dog has his day: his turn would come; and he might yet perhaps succeed in laying the old dragon asleep.

Chapter VIII

With a view to do this as soon as possible, at the end of the first act he begged a friend who stood next to him to take his place by the side of Ida for a few minutes, and then hastened out. Under one of the lamps on the outside of the theatre, he took out from his pocket the envelope of a letter he had lately received, and with a pencil wrote upon it a formal declaration of love. His project was to ask Ida a second time for the play-bill, and on returning it to crush up the little note and put both together into her hand. But lord! how the wisest schemes are baffled! On returning to the pit, he found the whole condition of things changed. His faithless representative met him with an apology at the very door. The fact was that, seeing a pretty young lady standing close by him, the devil of gallantry had led him to cede to her use in perpetuity what had been committed

to his own care in trust only for a few minutes. Nor was this all; for, the lady being much admired and followed, and (like comets or Highland chieftains) having her "tail" on for this night, there was no possibility of reaching the neighbourhood of Ida for the pressure of the lady's tail of followers.

Chapter IX

In his whole life had Mr. Tempest never witnessed a more stupid performance, worse actors, or more disgusting people about him than during the time that he was separated from Ida. With the eye of an experienced tactician, he had calculated to a hair the course he must steer, on the termination of the play, to rejoin the object of his anxious regard. But alas! when the curtain dropped, he found his road quite blocked up. No remedy was left but to press right on, and without respect of persons. But he gained nothing by the indefatigable labour of his elbows except a great number of scowling looks. His attention was just called to this, when Ida, who had now reached the door, looked back for a moment, and then disappeared in company with her father. Two minutes after he had himself reached the door; but, looking round, he exclaimed pretty loudly—"Ah, good lord! it's of no use;" and then through the moonlight and the crowd of people he shot like an arrow, leaving them all to wonder what madness had seized the young advocate, who was usually so rational and composed. However, he overtook the object of his pursuit in the street in which he lived. For, upon his turning rapidly round the corner, Mr. Goodchild, alarmed at his noise and his speed, turned round upon him suddenly, and said—"Is this a man or a horse?"

Chapter X

"Mr. Goodchild," began the breathless barrister, "I am very much indebted to you."

"Hem!" said the other, in a way which seemed to express—"What now, my good sir?"

"You have this evening directed my attention to the eminent qualifications of our manager. Most assuredly you were in the right; he played the part divinely."

Here Mr. Tempest stopped to congratulate himself upon the triumphant expression which the moonlight revealed upon the

face of his antagonist. On this triumph, if his plans succeeded, he meant to build a triumph of his own.

"Ay, ay: what, then, you've come to reason at last, my good sir?"

"Your judgment and penetration, Mr. Goodchild, I am bound at all times to bow to as far superior to my own."

During this compliment to the merchant's penetration, Mr. Tempest gently touched the hand of Ida with his pencil note: the hand opened, and, like an oyster, closed upon it in an instant. "In which scene, Mr. Tempest," said the merchant, "is it your opinion that the manager acquitted himself best?"

"In which scene!" Here was a delightful question. The advocate had attended so exclusively to Ida that whether there were any scenes at all in the whole performance was more than he could pretend to say; and now he was to endure a critical examination on the merits of each scene in particular. He was in direful perplexity. Considering, however, that in most plays there is some love, and therefore some love-scenes, he dashed at it, and boldly said—"In that scene, I think, where he makes the declaration of love."

"Declaration of love! why, God bless my soul! in the whole part, from the beginning to end, there is nothing like a declaration of love."

"Oh, confound your accuracy, you old fiend!" thought Mr. Tempest to himself; but aloud he said—"No declaration of love, do you say? Is it possible? Why, then, I suppose I must have mistaken for the manager that man who played the lover: surely *he* played divinely."

"Divinely! divine stick! what, that wretched, stammering, wooden booby? Why, he would have been hissed off the stage, if it hadn't been well known that he was a stranger hired to walk through the part for that night."

Mr. Tempest, seeing that the more he said the deeper he plunged into the mud, held it advisable to be silent. On the other hand, Mr. Goodchild began to be ashamed of his triumph over what he had supposed the lawyer's prejudices. He took his leave, therefore, in these words: "Good-night, Mr. Tempest; and, for the future, my good sir, do not judge so precipitately as you did on that occasion when you complimented a black fellow with the title of king, and called St. Domingo by the absurd name of Hayti. Some little consideration and discretion go to every sound opinion."

So saying, the old dragon walked off with his treasure, and

left the advocate with his ears still tingling from his mortifications.

"Just to see the young people of this day," said Mr. Goodchild; "what presumption and what ignorance!" The whole evening through he continued to return to this theme, and during supper nearly choked himself in an ebullition of fiery zeal upon this favourite topic.

Chapter XI

The Letter-Box

To her father's everlasting question, "Am not I in the right, then?" Ida replied in a sort of pantomime, which was intended to represent "*Yes.*" This was her outward *yes;* but in her heart she was thinking of no other *yes* than that which she might one day be called on to pronounce at the altar by the side of Mr. Tempest. And therefore, at length, when the eternal question came round again, she nodded in a way which rather seemed to say, "Oh, dear sir, you are in the right for anything I have to say against it," than anything like a downright *yes.* On which Mr. Goodchild quitted one favourite theme for another more immediately necessary—viz. the lukewarmness of young people towards good counsel and sound doctrine.

Meantime, Ida's looks were unceasingly directed to her neck-handkerchief: the reason of which was this. In order, on the one hand, to have the love-letter as near as possible to her heart, and, on the other, to be assured that it was in safe custody, she had converted the beautiful white drapery of her bosom into a letter-case; and she felt continually urged to see whether the systole and diastole which went on in other important contents of this letter-case might not by chance expose it to view. The letter asked for an answer; and, late as it was, when all the house were in bed, Ida set about one. On the following morning, this answer was conveyed to its destination by the man who delivered the newspapers to her father and Mr. Tempest.

From this day forward there came so many letters to Miss Goodchild by the new-established post that the beautiful letter-case was no longer able to contain them. She was now obliged to resort to the help of her writing-desk; which, so long as her father had no suspicions, was fully sufficient.

Chapter XII

The paper intercourse now began to appear too little to Mr. Tempest. For what can be despatched in a moment by word of mouth would often linger unaccomplished for a thousand years when conducted in writing. True it was that a great deal of important business had already been despatched by the letters. For instance, Mr. Tempest had through this channel assured himself that Ida was willing to be his for ever. Yet even this was not enough. The contract had been made, but not sealed upon the rosy lips of Ida.

This seemed monstrous to Mr. Tempest. "Grant me patience," said he to himself; "grant me patience, when I think of the many disgusting old relations, great raw-boned, absurd fellows, with dusty snuff-powdered beards, that have revelled in that lip-paradise, hardly knowing—old withered wretches!—what they were about, or what a blessing was conferred upon them; whilst I—yes, I, that am destined to call her my bride one of these days—am obliged to content myself with payments of mere paper money."

This seemed shocking; and, indeed, considering the terms on which he now stood with Ida, Mr. Tempest could scarcely believe it himself. He paced up and down his study in anger, flinging glances at every turn upon the opposite house, which contained his treasure. All at once he stopped: "What's all this?" said he, on observing Mr. Goodchild's servants lighting up the chandeliers in the great saloon. "What's in the wind now?" And immediately he went to his writing-table for Ida's last letter; for Ida sometimes communicated any little events in the family that could anyways affect their correspondence; on this occasion, however, she had given no hint of anything extraordinary approaching. Yet the preparations and the bustle indicated something *very* extraordinary. Mr. Tempest's heart began to beat violently. What was he to think? Great fêtes, in a house where there is an only daughter, usually have some reference to *her*. "Go, Tyrrel," said he to his clerk, "go and make inquiries (but cautiously, you understand, and in a lawyer-like manner) as to the nature and tendency of these arrangements." Tyrrel came back with the following report:—Mr. Goodchild had issued cards for a very great party on that evening; all the seniors were invited to tea, and almost all the young people of condition throughout the town to a masqued

ball at night. The suddenness of the invitations, and the consequent hurry of the arrangements, arose in this way: a rich relative who lived in the country had formed a plan for coming by surprise, with his whole family, upon Mr. Goodchild. But Mr. Goodchild had accidentally received a hint of his intention by some side-wind, and had determined to turn the tables on his rich relation by surprising him with a masquerade.

"Oh, heavens! what barbarity!" said Mr. Tempest, as towards evening he saw from his windows young and old trooping to the fête. "What barbarity! There's hardly a scoundrel in the place but is asked; and I—I, John Tempest, that am to marry the jewel of the house—must be content to witness the preparations and to hear the sound of their festivities from the solitude of my den."

Chapter XIII

Questions and Commands

As night drew on, more and more company continued to pour in. The windows being very bright, and the curtains not drawn, no motion of the party could escape our advocate. What pleased him better than all the splendour which he saw was the melancholy countenance of the kind-hearted girl as she stood at the centre window and looked over at him. This melancholy countenance, and these looks directed at himself, were occasioned, as he soon became aware, by a proposal which had been made to play at questions and commands. This game, in fact, soon began. "Thunder and lightning!" said Mr. Tempest, discovering what it was, "is this to be endured?"

If the mere possibility of such an issue had alarmed him, how much more sensible was his affliction when he saw, as a matter of fact laid visibly before his bodily eyes, that every fool and coxcomb availed himself of the privilege of the game to give to Ida, his own destined bride, kisses [1] without let or hindrance; "whilst I," said he, "I, John Tempest, have never yet been blessed with one."

But if the *sight* of such liberties taken with his blooming Ida placed him on the brink of desperation, much more desperate did he become when that sight was shut out by that "consummate villain" (as he chose to style him) the footman, who at

[1] The reader must remember that the scene is laid in Germany. This and other instances of *grossièrete*, have been purposely retained, in illustration of German manners.

this moment took it into his head, or was ordered, to let down the curtains. Behind the curtains—ah! ye gods, what scenes might not pass!

"This must be put a stop to," said Mr. Tempest, taking his hat and cane, and walking into the street. Ay; but how? This was a question he could not answer. Wandering, therefore, up and down the streets until it had become quite dark, he returned at length to the point from which he had set out, and found that one nuisance at least—viz. the kissing—had ceased, and had given place to a concert. For Ida's musical talents and fine voice were well known, and she was generally called The Little Catalani. She was now singing, and a crowd of persons had collected under the window to hear her, who seemed, by their looks, to curse every passer-by for the disturbance he made.

Mr. Tempest crept on tiptoe to join the crowd of listeners, and was enraptured by the sweet tones of Ida's voice. After the conclusion of the air, and when the usual hubbub of enchanting! divine! etc., had rung out its peal, the by-standers outside began to talk of the masquerade. In the crowd were some of those who had been invited; and one amongst them was flattering himself that nobody would recognise him before he should unmasque.

Chapter XIV

The Death's Head Masque

Thus much information Mr. Tempest drew from this casual conversation, that he found it would not be required of the masquers to announce their names to any person on their arrival. Upon this hint he grounded a plan for taking a part in the masqued ball. By good luck he was already provided with a black domino against the winter masquerades at the public rooms; this domino was so contrived that the head of the wearer was hidden under the cloak, in which an imperceptible opening was made for the eyes; the real head thus became a pair of shoulders, and upon this was placed a false head, which, when lifted up, exposed a white skull with eyeless sockets, and grinning, with a set of brilliantly white teeth, at the curious spectator.

Having settled his scheme, Mr. Tempest withdrew to his own lodgings, in order to make preparations for its execution.

Chapter XV

It's only I

The company at Mr. Goodchild's consisted of two divisions. No. 1, embracing the elder or more fashionable persons, and those who were nearly connected with the family, had been invited to tea, supper, and a masqued ball; No. 2, the younger and less distinguished persons, had been invited to the ball only. This arrangement which proceeded from the penurious disposition of Mr. Goodchild, had on this occasion the hearty approbation of Mr. Tempest. About eleven o'clock, therefore, when a great part of the guests in the second division had already arrived, he ordered a sedan-chair to be fetched; and then, causing himself to be carried up and down through several streets, that nobody might discover from what house the gigantic domino had issued, he repaired to the house of Mr. Goodchild.

His extraordinary stature excited so much the more astonishment amongst the parti-coloured mob of masquers, because he kept himself wholly aloof from all the rest, and paced up and down with haughty strides. His demeanour and air had in it something terrific to everybody except to Ida, to whom he had whispered as he passed her alone in an ante-room—"Don't be alarmed; it's only I;" at the same time giving her a billet, in which he requested a few moments' conversation with her at any time in the course of the evening.

Some persons, however, had observed him speaking to Ida; and therefore, on her return to the great saloon, she was pressed on all sides to tell what she knew of the mysterious giant. She, good heavens! how should she know anything of him? "What had he said, then?" *That*, too, she could as little answer. He spoke, she said, in such a low, hollow, and unintelligible tone that she was quite alarmed, and heard nothing of what he uttered.

The company now betrayed more and more anxiety in reference to the unknown masque, so that Ida had no chance for answering his billet, or granting the request which it contained. Mr. Tempest now began to regret much that he had not selected an ordinary masque, in which he might have conversed at his ease, without being so remarkably pointed out to the public attention.

Chapter XVI

Suspicions

The murmurs about the tall domino grew louder and louder, and gathered more and more about him. He began to hear doubts plainly expressed whether he was actually invited. The master of the house protested that, so far from having any such giant amongst his acquaintance, he had never seen such a giant except in show-booths. This mention of booths gave a very unfortunate direction to the suspicions already abroad against the poor advocate; for at that time there was a giant in the town who was exhibiting himself for money, and Mr. Goodchild began to surmise that this man, either with a view to increasing his knowledge of men and manners, or for his recreation after the tedium of standing to be gazed at through a whole day's length, had possibly smuggled himself as a contraband article into his masqued ball.

Chapter XVII

Difficulties increased

The worthy host set to work very deliberately to count his guests, and it turned out that there was actually just one masque more than there should be. Upon this he stepped into the middle of the company and spoke at follows:—"Most respectable and respected masques, under existing circumstances, and for certain weighty causes me thereto moving (this phrase Mr. Goodchild had borrowed from his lawyer), I have to request that you will all and several, one after another, communicate your names to me, by whispering them into my ear."

Well did Mr. Tempest perceive what were the existing circumstances, and what the reasons thereto moving, which had led to this measure; and very gladly he would have withdrawn himself from this vexatious examination by marching off; but it did not escape him that a couple of sentinels were already posted at the door.

Chapter XVIII

Panic

More than one-half of the guests had already communicated their names to Mr. Goodchild, and stood waiting in the utmost

impatience for the examination of the giant. But the giant, on his part, was so little eager to gratify them by pressing before others that at length, when all the rest had gone through their probation honourably, he remained the last man, and thus was, *ipso facto*, condemned as the supernumerary man before his trial commenced.

The company was now divided into two great classes—those who had a marriage garment, and the unfortunate giant who had none. So much was clear; but, to make further discoveries, the host now stepped up to him hastily and said—"Your name, if you please?"

The masque stood as mute, as tall, and as immovable as the gable end of a house. "Your name?" repeated Mr. Goodchild; "I'll trouble you for your name?" No answer coming, a cold shivering seized upon Mr. Goodchild. In fact, at this moment a story came across him from his childish years, that, when Dr. Faustus was played, it had sometimes happened that amongst the stage devils there was suddenly observed to be one too many, and the supernumerary one was found to be no spurious devil, but a true, sound, and legitimate devil.

For the third time, while his teeth chattered, he said—"Your name, if you please?"

"I have none," said Mr. Tempest, in so hollow a voice that the heart of the worthy merchant sank down in a moment to his knee-buckles, and an ice-wind of panic began to blow pretty freshly through the whole company.

"Your face, then, if you please, sir?" stammered out Mr. Goodchild.

Very slowly and unwillingly the masque, being thus importunately besieged, proceeded to comply; but scarcely had he unmasqued and exposed the death's head, when every soul ran out of the room with an outcry of horror.

The masque sprang after them, bounding like a greyhound, and his grinning skull nodding as he moved. This he did under pretence of pursuing them, but in fact to take advantage of the general panic for making his exit.

Chapter XIX

The Parting Kiss—Miss Goodchild in the arms of Death

In an ante-room, now totally deserted, Death was met by Ida, who said to him—"Ah! for God's sake make your escape. Oh!

if you did but know what anxiety I have suffered on account of your strange conceit." Here she paused, and spite of her anxiety she could not forbear smiling at the thought of the sudden *coup-de-théâtre* by which Mr. Tempest had turned the tables upon every soul that had previously been enjoying his panic. In the twinkling of an eye he had inflicted a far deeper panic upon them, and she had herself been passed by the whole herd of fugitives—tall and short, corpulent and lanky, halt and lame, young and old—all spinning away with equal energy before the face of the supernumerary guest.

Death, in return, told Ida how he had been an eye-witness to the game of questions and commands, and to the letting down of the curtains. This spectacle (he acknowledged) had so tortured him that he could stand it no longer, and he had sworn within himself that he would have a kiss as well as other persons; and further, that he would go and fetch it himself from the midst of the masquerade, though not expecting to have been detected as the extra passenger or nip.[1] And surely, when a whole company had tasted the ambrosia of her lips, Miss Goodchild would not be so unkind as to dismiss him alone without that happiness.

No, Miss Goodchild was not so unkind; and Death was just in the act of applying his lips to the rosy mouth of Ida, when old Goodchild came peeping in at the door to see if the coast was clear of the dreadful masque, and behind him was a train of guests, all stepping gently and on tip-toe from an adjoining corridor.

Every soul was petrified with astonishment on seeing the young, warm-breathing Ida on such close and apparently friendly terms with the black gigantic Death, whose skull was grinning just right above the youthful pair, and surmounting them like a crest. At this sight all became plain, and the courage of the company, which had so recently sunk below the freezing point, suddenly rose at once above boiling heat. Mr. Goodchild levelled a blow at the Death's head which had caused him so much pain and agitation; and Mr. Tempest, seeing that no better course remained, made off for the front door; and thus the uninvited masque, who had so lately chased and ejected the whole body of the invited ones, was in turn chased and ejected by them.

[1] In England, passengers who are taken up on stage coaches by the collusion of the guard and coachman, without the knowledge of the proprietors, are called *nips*.

The festivities had been too violently interrupted to be now resumed; the guests took leave; and the weeping Ida was banished to a close confinement in her own room.

Chapter XX

Here ends our episode. It was on the very morning after this *fracas* that Mr. Whelp waited upon Mr. Goodchild, to report to him the universal opinion of the world upon the bust of the late stamp-distributor, his brother; and upon that opinion to ground an appeal to his justice.

A worse season for his visit he could not possibly have chosen. Mr. Goodchild stormed, and said—"The case had been tried and disposed of; and he must insist on being troubled with no further explanations." And so far did his anger make him forget the common courtesies of life that he never asked the proprietor of the china-works to sit down. Mr. Whelp, on his part, no less astonished and irritated at such treatment, inquired at the footman what was the matter with his master; and the footman, who was going away, and was reckless of consequences, repeated the whole history of the preceding night with fits of laughter; and added that the sport was not yet over, for that this morning a brisk correspondence had commenced between his master and Mr. Tempest—which, by the effect produced on the manners of both, seemed by no means of the gentlest nature.

Chapter XXI

The King of Hayti

This account was particularly agreeable to Mr. Whelp. Concluding that, under the present circumstances, Mr. Tempest would naturally be an excellent counsellor against Mr. Goodchild, he hastened over to his apartments, and said that his last effort to bring the merchant over the way to any reasonable temper of mind having utterly failed, he had now another scheme. But first of all he wished to have the professional opinion of Mr. Tempest whether he should lay himself open to an action if he took the following course to reimburse himself the expenses of the three dozen of busts:—He had been told by some Englishman, whose name he could not at this moment call to mind, that the bust of the stamp-master was a most striking likeness of Christophe, the black King of Hayti: now, this being the case,

what he proposed to do was to wash over the late stamp-distributor with a black varnish, and to export one dozen and a half of the distributor on speculation to St. Domingo, keeping the rest for home consumption.

When Mr. Tempest heard this plan stated, in spite of his own disturbance of mind at the adventures of the last night, he could not forbear laughing heartily at the conceit; for he well knew what was the real scheme which lurked under this pretended exportation to St. Domingo. Some little time back, Mr. Goodchild had addressed to the German people, through the *General Advertiser*, this question:—"How or whence it came about that, in so many newspapers of late days, mention had been made of a kingdom of Hayti, when it was notorious to everybody that the island in question was properly called St. Domingo?" He therefore exhorted all editors of political journals to return to more correct principles. On the same occasion he had allowed himself many very disrespectful expressions against "a certain black fellow who pretended to be King of Hayti;" so that it might readily be judged that it would not be a matter of indifference to him if his late brother the stamp-master were sold under the name of King of Hayti.

The barrister's opinion was that, as the heir of the bespeaker had solemnly deposed to the non-resemblance of the busts, and had on this ground found means to liberate himself from all obligation to take them or to pay for them, those busts had reverted in full property to the china-works. However, he advised Mr. Whelp to blacken only one of them for the present, to place it in the same window where one had stood before, and then to await the issue.

Chapter XXII

A week after this, the bust of the stamp-distributor, with the hair and face blackened, was placed in the window; and below it was written, in gilt letters, "*His Most Excellent Majesty, the King of Hayti.*"

This manœuvre operated with the very best effect. The passers-by all remembered to have seen the very same face a short time ago as the face of a white man; and they all remembered to whom the face belonged. The laughing, therefore, never ceased from morning to night before the window of the china-works.

Now, Mr. Goodchild received very early intelligence of what was going on, possibly through some persons specially commissioned by Mr. Whelp to trouble him with the news; and straightway he trotted off to the china-works—not, to be sure, with any view of joining the laughers, but, on the contrary, to attack Mr. Whelp, and to demand the destruction of the bust. However, all his remonstrances were to no purpose; and the more anger he betrayed, so much the more did it encourage his antagonist.

Mr. Goodchild hurried home in a great passion, and wrote a note to the borough-reeve, with a pressing request that he would favour him with his company to supper that evening, to taste some genuine bottled London porter.

This visit, however, did not lead to those happy results which Mr. Goodchild had anticipated. True it was that he showed his discretion in not beginning to speak of the busts until the bottled porter had produced its legitimate effects upon the spirits of the borough-reeve: the worshipful man was in a considerable state of elevation; but for all *that* he would not predict any favourable issue to the action against Mr. Whelp which his host was meditating. He shrugged his shoulders, and said that, on the former occasion when Mr. Goodchild had urged the bench to pronounce for the *nonresemblance* of the busts, they had gone further, in order to gratify him, than they could altogether answer to their consciences; but, really, to come now and call upon the same bench to pronounce for the *resemblance* of the same identical busts was altogether inadmissible.

Chapter XXIII

Mr. Goodchild was on the brink of despair the whole night through; and, when he rose in the morning and put his head out of the window to inhale a little fresh air, what should be the very first thing that met him but a poisonous and mephitic blast from the window of his opposite neighbour, which in like manner stood wide open: for his sharp sight easily detected that the young barrister, his enemy, instead of the gypsum bust of Ulpian which had hitherto presided over his library, had mounted the black china bust of the King of Hayti.

Without a moment's delay Mr. Goodchild jumped into his clothes and hastened down to Mr. Whelp. His two principles of vitality, avarice and ambition, had struggled together through-

out the night; but, on the sight of his brother the stamp-master, thus posthumously varnished with lamp-black, and occupying so conspicuous a station in the library of his mortal enemy, ambition had gained a complete victory. He bought up, therefore, the whole thirty-five busts; and, understanding that the only black copy was in the possession of Mr. Tempest, he begged that, upon some pretext or other, Mr. Whelp would get it back into his hands, promising to pay all expenses out of his own purse.

Mr. Whelp shook his head; but promised to try what he could do, and went over without delay to the advocate's rooms. Meantime, the longer he stayed and made it evident that the negotiation had met with obstacles, so much the larger were the drops of perspiration which stood upon Mr. Goodchild's forehead, as he paced up and down his room in torment.

At last Mr. Whelp came over, but with bad news; Mr. Tempest was resolute to part with the bust at no price.

Chapter XXIV

Dictation

Mr. Goodchild on hearing this intelligence, hastened to his daughter, who was still under close confinement, and, taking her hand, said,—"Thoughtless girl, come and behold!" Then, conducting her to his own room, and pointing with his finger to Mr. Tempest's book-case, he said—"See there! behold my poor deceased brother, the stamp-distributor! to what a situation is he reduced—that, after death, he must play the part of a black fellow, styling himself King of Hayti! And is it with such a man, one who aims such deadly stabs at the honour and peace of our family, that you would form a clandestine connection? I blush for you, inconsiderate child. However, sit down to my writing-desk, and this moment write what I shall dictate, *verbatim et literatim;* and in that case I shall again consider and treat you as my obedient daughter." Ida seated herself: her father laid a sheet of paper before her, put a pen into her hand, and dictated the following epistle, in which he flattered himself that he had succeeded to a marvel in counterfeiting the natural style of a young lady of seventeen:—

"Respectable and friendly Sir,—Since the unfortunate masquerade, I have not had one hour of peace. My excellent and most judicious father has shut me up in my own apartments;

and, according to special information which I have had, it is within the limits of possibility that my confinement may last for a year and a day. Now, therefore, whereas credible intelligence has reached me that you have, by purchase from the china-manufactory of the city, possessed yourself of a bust claiming to be the representation of a black fellow, who (most absurdly!) styles himself King of Hayti; and whereas, from certain weighty reasons him thereunto moving, my father has a desire to sequestrate into his own hands any bust or busts purporting to represent the said black fellow; and whereas, further, my father has caused it to be notified to me that immediately upon the receipt of the said bust through any honourable application of mine to you, he will release me from arrest: therefore, and on the aforesaid considerations, I, Ida Goodchild, spinster, do hereby make known my request to you, that, as a testimony of those friendly dispositions which you have expressed, or caused to be expressed, to me, you would, on duly weighing the premises, make over to me the bust aforesaid in consideration of certain monies (as shall be hereafter settled) to be by me paid over unto you. Which request being granted and ratified, I shall, with all proper respect, acknowledge myself your servant and well-wisher,

IDA GOODCHILD,
"*manu propria.*"

The two last words the poor child knew not how to write, and therefore her father wrote them for her, and said—"The meaning of these words is that the letter was written with your own hand; upon which, in law, a great deal depends." He then folded up the letter, sealed it, and rang for a servant to carry it over to Mr. Tempest. "But not from me, do you hear, William! Don't say it comes from me: and, if Mr. Tempest should cross-examine you, be sure you say I know nothing of it."

CHAPTER XXV

Candour

"For the rest," said Mr. Goodchild, "never conceit that I shall lend any the more countenance, for all this, to your connection with the young visionary. As soon as the bust is once in my hands, from that moment he and I are strangers, and shall know each other no more."

Mr. Goodchild had not for a long time been in such spirits

as he was after this most refined *tour d'addresse* in diplomacy (as he justly conceived it). "The style," said he, "cannot betray the secret: no, I flatter myself that I have hit *that* to a hair; I defy any critic, the keenest, to distinguish it from the genuine light sentimental *billet-doux* style of young ladies of seventeen. How should he learn, then? William dares not tell him for his life. And the fellow can never be such a brute as to refuse the bust to a young lady whom he pretends to admire. Lord! it makes me laugh to think what a long face he'll show when he asks for permission to visit you upon the strength of this sacrifice, and I, looking at him like a bull, shall say, 'No, indeed, my good sir; as to the bust, what's that to me, my good sir? What do I care for the bust, my good sir? I believe it's all broken to pieces with a sledge-hammer, or else you might have it back again for anything I care. Eh, Ida, my girl, won't that be droll? Won't it be laughable to see what a long face he'll cut?' But, but——"

Chapter XXVI

Won't it be laughable to see what a long face the fellow will cut?

If Ida had any particular wish to see *how* laughable a fellow looked under such circumstances, she had very soon that gratification; for her father's under jaw dropped enormously on the return of the messenger. It did not perhaps require any great critical penetration to determine from what member of the family the letter proceeded; and, independently of *that*, Mr. Tempest had (as the reader knows) some little acquaintance with the epistolary style of Miss Goodchild. In his answer, therefore, he declined complying with the request; but, to convince his beloved Ida that his refusal was designed not for her, but for her father, he expressed himself as follows:—

"Madam, my truly respectable young friend,—It gives me great concern to be under the painful necessity of stating that it is wholly out of my power to make over unto you the bust of his gracious majesty the King of Hayti, 'in consideration' (as you express it) 'of certain monies to be by you paid over unto me.' This, I repeat, is wholly impossible: seeing that I am now on the point of ratifying a treaty with an artist, in virtue of which three thousand copies are to be forthwith taken of the said bust on account of its distinguished excellence, and

to be dispersed to my friends and others throughout Europe. With the greatest esteem, I remain your most obedient and devoted servant, JOHN TEMPEST."

CHAPTER XXVII

Unexpected Denouement

"Now, then," thought Mr. Goodchild, "the world is come to a pretty pass." The honour and credit of his name and family seemed to stand on the edge of a razor; and, without staying for any further consideration, he shot over, like an arrow, to Mr. Tempest.

Scarcely was he out of the house when in rushed the postman with a second note to Miss Goodchild, apologising for the former, and explaining to her the particular purpose he had in writing it.

How well he succeeded in this was very soon made evident by the circumstance of her father's coming back with him, arm-in-arm. Mr. Tempest had so handsomely apologised for any offence he might have given, and with a tone of real feeling had rested his defence so entirely upon the excess of his admiration for Miss Goodchild, which had left him no longer master of his own actions or understanding, that her father felt touched and flattered—forgave everything frankly—and allowed him to hope, from his daughter's mouth, for the final ratification of his hopes.

"But this one stipulation I must make, my good sir," said Mr. Goodchild, returning to his political anxieties, "that in future you must wholly renounce that black fellow, who styles himself (most absurdly!) the King of Hayti." "With all my heart," said Mr. Tempest: "Miss Goodchild will be cheaply purchased by renouncing *The King of Hayti*."

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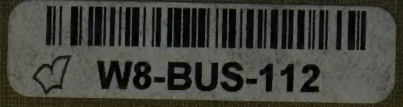
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